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THE AVESTA AND THE BIBLE.



LECTURES DELIVERED IN BOMBAY

BY THE

REV. HECTOR McNEILE, M.A.,

LATE FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD.

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PREFACE.

The Lectures appearing in this volume are in substance the same as those I delivered in the C. M. S. Lecture Hall, Grant Road, Bombay, during last cold weather. They are offered to the public as a contribution to the literature on the subject of Zoroastrianism, not altogether as it exists in practice, but as it is expounded by authority. A comparison between current Zoroastrianism and Christianity is not quite the same as between the Avesta and the Bible. It would have been easy to strengthen some of the positions I have advanced, if it had been fair to rely upon practices now in vogue. For instance, in showing how little there is of Catholicism in the religion of the Parsees, I might have referred to their preference for the use of the Zend language in their prayers, even though they do not understand it. This is openly acknowledged, and is actually argued for, (so I have been told by a friend in this city,) on the ground that the cadence of the Zend is more acceptable to God than that of any other language. In the opinion of those who hold such a doctrine, all of us who speak a language that has no affinity with the

Zend must be hopelessly kept at a distance from the throne of grace. But to use any such argument would not have been fair, my object being to compare the two religions in their essential features, and not merely in their accidentals. And it might have been answered truly enough that praying in an unknown tongue is no essential part of Zoroastrianism, for there is nothing said about it in the Avesta. And so with other things, such as punctilious attention to dress ; refusal to admit outsiders to the benefits, or supposed benefits, of the religion ; and so on. In the same way there are practices current, even widely current, among Christians, which cannot fairly be alleged to Parsees, as showing that Christianity is either better or worse than their religion, for the simple reason that they are mere adjuncts to Christianity ; they might possibly be altered or disused and Christianity itself in its essence remain unchanged: e.g. the practice of gathering for meetings of various sorts, or of singing hymns together, or of annually commemorating some of the chief events of our Lord's life, or many others. I have therefore taken the books themselves, the Avesta and the *Bâle*, as the ground for comparison, and have had regard, not to this or that modern authority, but to the sacred writings only.

The quotations from the Avesta are mostly taken from Bleek's translation of Spiegel's Avesta. This book Minocher Dustur Jamaspji was good enough to lend me, and I take this opportunity of thanking him for it. Also

I am glad to express my thanks to four other gentlemen who kindly helped me by taking the chair at the meetings at which the Lectures were delivered. At the first meeting the Honorable Mr. Justice Chandavarkar presided ; and after him Mr. C. M. Cursetji, Mr. Hormusji Dadabhuoy, and the Rev. M. H. Mody.

The Explanation of the Bible story of the Creation, as given in the Lecture on Cosmogeny is derived from the much fuller statement of Mr. Hugh Capron in his masterly work entitled "The Conflict of Truth." And in like manner I would acknowledge my indebtedness for much of my last Lecture to Mr. John Urquhart's publications. His "New Biblical Guide," Vol. II, contains the quotations from various geological writers of which I have made use, and others besides ; and the thoughts I have expressed as to the meaning of Job xxvi, 7, are mainly derived from a pamphlet he issued entitled "Roger's Reasons."

H. MC NEILE.

C. M. S. HOUSE, BOMBAY.

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LECTURE I.

THE ANTIQUITY

OF THE

AVESTA AND THE BIBLE.

The Avesta and the Bible are two books of more than common importance. Each is unique in its way ; each is regarded as sacred ; each has had the tribute paid to it of a large subordinate literature springing up to explain and enlarge upon it. The adherents of the two are being brought much into communication with each other, and the books are the exponents of what have been called Rival Creeds. This very expression Rival Creeds implies that the two are felt to be in some sort of opposition ; they occupy to some extent the same ground, but in ways that are inconsistent one with another, each supplies the basis for a religion, the materials for

a creed ; and the creeds that have been formulated are not independent, so that a man may accept one and then take the other as a pure addition ; as he might study geology and then take electricity as an addition ; nor are they entirely harmonious, in which case they would be complementary not rival ; but they claim to govern our actions in this life and give us hopes for the life to come, and neither in one respect nor the other can we amalgamate or reconcile the doctrines. Moreover as a matter of fact the two creeds have come into serious collision. One or two instances have occurred of a so-called Christian seeking admission into the Zoroastrian community, and I believe there is at this present time a committee of experts sitting to consider whether such admission is permissible : more than one or two instances have occurred of Parsees desiring to become Christians, and all who give evidence of being sincere in this desire are accepted and welcomed into the Christian Church. It is therefore only reasonable that these two Rival Creeds should be carefully studied side by side, and that especially in Western India, the adopted home of the Parsees, because the Christian religion, in its action as towards the Zoroastrian, is more in evidence here than elsewhere. In London the two are certainly brought into contact, but not at all so directly and avowedly as here, for the Parsees have set on foot no mission with intent to convert the English. When they do, one element of disparity between us will have disappeared,

The contribution to the discussion which I offer in this course of Lectures is this :—I am bringing together some materials which may enable you to form a fair and honest judgement between the two Creeds, and am inviting you to consider the matter earnestly. My subject this evening is the Antiquity of the two Books. This is a point we may examine antecedently to any thought of rivalry between them. If of two things one is better than the other, the better one may be either newer or older than the worse : and so we may try and balance the arguments for greater or less antiquity in the case of each book quite dispassionately. Indeed in itself the question is all but immaterial ; but if we desire to gain true and accurate acquaintance with a book we should know its age ; we may be unable otherwise fairly to estimate its intrinsic worth, and hence its claim, if any, on our allegiance. This is especially so if the book professes to contain prophecy, for in that case to prove a date of authorship later than the events prophesied would turn the profession into imposture. Of course a book may without detriment to its value have been written at different times, and some portions may be older, by centuries even, than others. This would militate against the genuineness and worth of the book only if the contents are inconsistent with such gradual production ; if *e. g.* the whole work is ascribed to a single author ; ascribed I mean by the book itself, not merely by outside testimony.

Now there are two lines of enquiry open to us in judging of the age of a book ; external and internal evidence. As a sample of external evidence, let me suppose that in a newspaper report of some speech made at a meeting this 28th day of November, 1903, Mr. Morley's Life of Gladstone was mentioned ; that would be evidence at any future time that the book in question had been issued by this date ; and it would not be necessary for a reader of the report to know anything whatever of the contents of the book ; the evidence is external. It is a very convincing kind of argument so far as it goes, but sometimes it does not go very far. Internal evidence we obtain by examining the contents, if they are such as to supply it. It may be directly historical, as when events of known position in history are recounted or referred to ; it may be indirectly historical, as when the book comes into alignment with thoughts or theories that have a historical stamp upon them ; or the evidence may be philological, as when words or phrases are familiarly used that were imported into that language, whatever the language of the book may be, at a certain period, and passed out of it at another certain period. Thus if one of us were to light upon an undated document which named King Edward VII, we should have direct historical evidence that it was issued since the beginning of the current century ; if we found one that discoursed upon Imperialism, that would be indirect historical evidence for dating it within the last six years or so ; if it spoke of anyone as being Boycotted, we should have a sound

philological argument for holding it to be not earlier than the time when Captain Boycott's ill treatment in Ireland gave occasion for the adoption of his name into the English language as a verb. A philological argument of another kind, and of much inferior cogency, is sometimes made use of when a critic thinks that the style of a writing gives an indication of its date; in this case, as the strength of his reasoning rests upon "I think," he cannot complain if another critic says "I think differently."

Turning now to the books before us, I will take the Avesta first, and try to give you some idea of the date that has been assigned to it, and the grounds for assigning such date.

(A.) Beginning with External evidence we may enquire into the date of the existing Mss.; but the oldest of these is only of the 13th century A.D. so that we must depend for our information on those who have mentioned the book, not on those who have copied it. Further back we come to Mohammedan writers, and it is worth while pausing for a moment over the statement of Masudi, who lived in the 10th century A. D. He tells us that Zeradusht wrote the Avesta, and a commentary on it called Zend, and after his death the Persians composed the Yazdah. An earlier statement comes to us from Hermippos, a philosopher of Smyrna, who lived in the 3rd century B. C. His books are lost; but Pliny, 3 or 4 centuries after him, tells us that he studied all the Zoroastrian books, comprising two millions of ver-

ses, and gave the contents of each book separately. The ruthless destruction of those books by Alexander has been credited with the loss of most of them ; but Hermippos was in the century following Alexander, so that the original writings must be supposed pretty voluminous, if their shattered remains were two million verses. Our Bible contains only 31,103 verses. But however much exaggeration there may be in Pliny's estimate, we may be fairly assured from his words that the Avesta was in existence in the 3rd century B.C. There are earlier notices of Zoroaster and his teaching, but none expressly and directly of his writings ; and if it could be shown that Zoroaster lived 1000 years before Hermippos, it would not necessarily follow that the Avesta was equally ancient : a great teacher may leave it to his followers to reduce his words to writing. Any earlier date than the 3rd century B.C. must be believed, if it is believed, on internal or inferential evidence. Before leaving external evidence however, I would make one suggestion which may have weight with some minds. The centuries preceding Alexander were by no means devoid of literary activity, and if the Avesta was in existence long before his time it is not likely that the destruction of a single library blotted out of existence any portion of a book that was highly valued. Indeed the third book of Dinkard states ~~that~~ there was another copy of the Avesta besides the ~~one~~ which was burnt at Persepolis, and that the Greeks took possession of it and translated it into their language. (B.) Passing on to the Internal evidence, a study of the

books themselves may lead us to the opinion, which is expressed with confidence by some scholars, that different portions of the Avesta were written at different times. The Gathas are accounted older than the rest of the Avesta, and an interval of two or three centuries is said to intervene between them and the next subsequent portions. So Mr. Karaka tells us, quoting Dr. Haug : " Of the Parsee Scriptures which are now extant a portion, and that the most important, is written in the Gatha dialect of the Avesta language. The 5 Gathas (chapters XXVII to LIV of the Yasna), known as the writings of the great prophet himself, and various other pieces here and there, are composed in this dialect. The rest is written in the ordinary Avesta language. According to Dr. Haug both these dialects, the Gatha and the ordinary Avesta, represent the same Avesta language at two different periods of time. The Gatha dialect, from its more ancient and fuller grammatical forms, as well as from its more primitive state, appears to be older than the ordinary Avesta language by about two or three centuries. " * Dr. Haug adds ; " While the other parts are nowhere said to be the work of Spitama Zarathushtra himself, he is distinctly and expressly mentioned in the Srosh Yasht as the author of these ancient and sacred songs. In the other parts of the Zend Avesta Zarathushtra is spoken of in the third person, and even occasionally invoked as a divine being ; in the Gathas he speaks of himself in the first person. " †

* History of the Parsees, Vol. 2, P. 155.

† Haug's Essays, P. 257.

Let me give you an instance. In the Gatha Ust vaiti this passage occurs :—"What reward grantest thou, Asha, to the praying Zarathushtra, to me who worship you with praises, Mazda Ahura?" And in the Vendidad we read repeatedly "Zarathushtra asked Ahura Mazda."—There are nevertheless several places in the Gathas where Zarathushtra is spoken of in the third person ; and we find him speaking in the first person elsewhere, as in Yasna VIII, where these words occur,—“I urge, I who am Zarathushtra, the first of the families &c.” Arguments of this kind are precarious there are three books of the Bible in which the author suddenly changes from one dialect to another for reasons which are more or less clear, and there is no room whatever to suppose that the change of dialect implies change of authorship : and it is not uncommon to find an author speaking of himself in the third person. Hence I am not at all convinced of the conclusion drawn from the difference of style, *viz.* that the Gathas are two or three centuries older than the rest of the Avesta, but I defer to the scholars quoted and accept their opinion. The next step then is to fix the date of Zoroaster, and from it we shall know that of the Gathas, or at least we shall know the earliest date that can be assigned to them. Here there is a wide field of variance. The Bundahish, in its chronological chapter puts the reign of Vishtaspa 288 years before Alexander ; and Masudi, already quoted, says that Zoroaster was 280 years before Alexander ; Vishtaspa was cotemporary with Zoroaster, and thus these two

authorities agree, and according to them the date of the prophet will be 600 B.C. or thereabouts; so that we should think of him as living about the same time as Jewish prophet Daniel. If Vishtaspa is identified with Hystaspes, the father of Darius, Zoroaster occupies a slighter later position, for Darius came to the throne in the year 521 B.C., so that his father's reign, if he ever did reign, must be placed about the middle of the sixth century B.C. But the ancestors of Darius as given in the Persian inscription are entirely different from those of Vishtaspa as given in the Avesta, so that the identification cannot be relied upon. Besides, in one inscription Darius is named as King, and his son and grandson also, but his father's name is given without the royal title.

The earliest Greek writer from whom we have any mention of Zoroaster, Xanthos of Lydia, lived not long after Darius, and he certainly did not regard Zoroaster as cotemporary with the father of Darius, for he puts him 600 years before the Trojan war, *i.e.* about 1800 B. C. Berosus, the Babylonian historian, assigns him a still earlier date by about four centuries, and makes him the founder of a dynasty of Babylonian Kings; while others sweep him backwards yet further through 40 more centuries.

This very wide divergence among our authorities may possibly have arisen in part from the fact that the name Zoroaster has been given to different persons; Mr. Karaka enumerates six, To distinguish the Iranian

prophet from other men of the same name he is called by his patronymic Spitama. The divergence is equally baffling however it arose, and so far as external evidence goes it leaves us with a choice for the date of the Gathas ranging from about 6200 to about 550 B. C.

Passing from this survey of what is told us of Zoroaster's era to other lines of argument we are not much better off.

(1) In the first Fargard of the Vendidad Ahura Mazda is introduced as telling Zoroaster the different pleasant regions he had produced, and the baneful formations of *Angro-mainyus* in opposition to them. These regions appear to be all Iranian, but the 15th of them is *Hapta Hindu*, *i. e.* India of the seven rivers, or what we now call the Panjab. But as the Panjab did not pass under Persian sway until the reign of Darius Hystaspes, this mention of it supports the Bundahish and Masudi in the late date they assign to Zoroaster.

(2) A comparison between the names of gods and demons in the Avesta and the Vedas has suggested the belief that the Indo-Iranian religion was at some remote period one and the same, and that a schism took place of such a character that the Vedic gods became hated and disgraced among the Iranians. Thus the Vedic god Indra is a fiend in the Avesta. The word *Daeva* is "demon" in the Avesta ; while *per contra* Ahura, which is the name of the supreme God in the Avesta means "demon" in the Vedas. Not indeed in the oldest

Vedas, which must consequently have been composed before the rupture. On the other hand in post-Vedic times the Trimurti of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, comes into prominence ; and as this is never alluded to in the Avesta, the probability would seem to be that it was developed after the Avesta was written. The existence of this schism as determining the age of the Avesta, if acknowledged, will carry back the era of composition a long way beyond Darius Hystaspes, perhaps even as far as the earliest date assigned to Zoroaster. And this has lately been supported by a third argument.

(3) The Brahmanical writings indicate some astronomical knowledge on the part of their authors, and show that at the time of their composition the earth's axis occupied a different position with reference to the stars from what it occupies now. A certain motion of rotation, known to English astronomers as Nutation, would transfer the axis from its old position to its new one ; such a motion is actually taking place, but very slowly, and it has been reckoned, I know not with what degree of accuracy, that the position indicated in these Brahmanical writings was the actual position rather more than 7000 years ago.

Such enormous figures may bring us into collision with the philologist or the ethnologist : if we go much further, even the geologist may meet us with a warning signal. However I give you what has been alleged, and you must take it for what you think it is worth.

The net result is that internal evidence does not suffice to remove the uncertainty in which the external landed us ; and unless thousands of years elapsed between the earliest and latest Avesta compositions, we must decide as best we can between the various arguments, and accept the one that seems to us most cogent. This introduces a personal element into the enquiry, and naturally different persons will arrive at different conclusions.

When we come to the Bible, the enquiry as to its date is less perplexing. It is true there is some amount of uncertainty, but if the authors are credited with common honesty the uncertainty is limited to a comparatively narrow range. I know that some writers have gone on a different assumption, and have freely attributed imposture and fraud to several of the authors. *E.g.* A book which purports to give laws and regulations issued to the people of Israel, before they took possession of that land which they still call their own, is assigned to a period later by about nine centuries or more, and the author is accused of having attempted to palm it off upon his countrymen as though it had come from the earlier date ; he would make them believe that their ancestors for 20 or 30 generations had lived under those laws, when in fact they were his own invention.

Such a charge of deliberate forgery is scarcely to be accounted fair criticism ; especially when it is made without a shadow of evidence beyond the critic's own " I think." The critic may think what he likes, but if

his thoughts run counter to both ethical and historical evidence, the result, at least in my esteem, is to discredit his judgment, and that not on this particular point only but on others also. I shall say no more of such wild and ungenerous conjectures : I have attributed no dishonesty to the authors of the Avesta, and shall attribute none to the authors of the Bible.

The Bible contains two main sections, the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament is sometimes called the Jewish Scriptures, because it is the sacred book of the Jewish religion. Christians have received it from the Jews, and we acknowledge the newer section also which they refuse. I will take these two sections separately, for the evidence that establishes their antiquity is wholly different.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

(A.) External evidence. The oldest Ms. in existence is of the 4th century A.D. and about that time much attention was given to questions of authorship in connection with the books of the New Testament. As a considerable number of Christian books was in existence it became a matter of importance to decide which were to be considered a portion of the sacred group, and which were merely the production of the individuals who wrote them. The sacred group of writings, acknowledged to be the Word of God, and as such entitled to acceptance with faith and obedience among all Christians, were called the Canon. Councils were held about the middle of the fourth century A.D., and later

on, which had for their purpose to decide this question of the Canon ; and while these Councils and individual writers are not wholly unanimous as to their acceptance or rejection of particular books, they make it quite clear that all the books we include in the New Testament were in existence at that time. The several books are named and frequent quotations are made from their contents. Before the accession of Constantine to the throne of the Roman empire it was impossible for Christians to gather together in councils, but we have just as clear testimony from individual writers. These quote or clearly refer to passages in one or other of our books, and sometimes enumerate several of the books together. *E.g.* Tertullian, an African writer about the beginning of the 3rd century, mentions most of our books ; in one passage he names eight of them. Irenæus of Smyrna, in the 2nd century, was in his youth the pupil of a man who had learnt directly from the Apostle John, and so is removed from the apostolic age by only a single life : in his writings he testifies directly to our four Gospels, and three other books of the New Testament. His letter was sent from the Gallican Church in Lyons to the Christians in Asia, and contains an affecting narrative of a persecution that had befallen them ; it refers unmistakeably to several of our books besides those mentioned by name. Before the close of the 2nd century also a document was issued which has not been completely preserved ; it is mutilated, and the name of the author is unknown ; it goes among us by the name of the modern Italian scholar

who brought it to notice, Muratori ; and its subject is the Canon of the New Testament : all but five of our books are mentioned in it. I will name one more writer, Justin Martyr. He was a philosopher, and studied in different schools until he became acquainted with the New Testament ; of this he says " I found Christianity to be the only philosophy that is sure and suited to man's wants." He refers to five of our books by name besides giving clear references to several others. His evidence goes far beyond simply proving the existence of the books, for he calls the Gospels the Memoirs of the Apostles, and says that these Memoirs were read as Scripture at the devotional meetings of the Christians. There are two or three writers earlier still ; their remains are scanty, but they serve to strengthen the first link of the chain that stretches back unbroken from our own day to the times of the Apostles themselves, the authors of the books.

(B.) And hence when we open these books, 27 in number, to examine the internal evidence, there is nothing left to be evidenced unless it be the exact circumstances and date of each one in particular. In some cases all is clear, in others we must be content to know the date within a few years. The whole group belongs to the period from about A.D. 50 to the end of the first century. Several of the books contain references to current events of Roman or Jewish history. Thus in the first five of them, which record Jesus Christ's birth and ministry, and the rise of the Christian Church,

we find mention of the following events amongst others ; the death of Herod the Great ; the partition of his kingdom ; the emperorship of Augustus, Tiberius, and Claudius ; the governorship of Pontius Pilate ; the marriage of Herod, tetrarch of Galilee, to Herodias his brother Philip's wife ; the imprisonment and execution of John the Baptist by this Herod ; the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem ; the ascendancy of the sect of the Sadducees over their rivals the Pharisees ; the sudden death of Herod the king (not the tetrarch) during a high political function ; the arrival of Felix, and later of Festus, to take charge of the province that had been Pilate's ; the arrival of king Agrippa in that province on a visit to Festus. We are also told, that Philippi was a Roman colony, that Ephesus was a pro-consular province, and so on. A few other details are given in some of the Epistles which the Apostles wrote to their converts in different places. And all these are in strictest accord with what we know of the times from accredited Roman historians.

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Here we have support from external evidence to a certain extent, but it fails us as we seek to trace it back towards the books themselves as originally issued. Beginning with the first century A.D. the evidence is clear and abundant : the New Testament writers make frequent quotations from it, and so do other Jewish writers of the same period. Further back we come to the Greek version of it, which was made about the year

280 B.C. ; and that is as far as we can go clearly and expressly with external evidence, except as regards the first five books of the Bible, the books of Moses. Persian history supplies us with reliable information about these as far back as the reign of Cyrus. When by his permission the Jews returned from captivity to their own land, their neighbors the Samaritans became their enemies, and the breach was never healed. Through the centuries that followed the Samaritans had their version of the books of Moses, which was all but identical with the version preserved by the Jews ; and this enmity between the two nations is proof that the one version could not have been borrowed from the other at any later period than the reign of Cyrus. But if external evidence is deficient, the internal is full and rich. There are six books of the Old Testament which belong to the time of the Persian monarchy, three to the time of the Babylonian captivity which preceded that monarchy, twenty-one to the time of the Jewish kingdom before the captivity, and nine are previous to the era of the kingdom. Some of these extend over a wide span, and are clearly compiled from many original documents, but all except two or three have their place in the historical sequence distinctly marked. The later writers frequently refer to the earlier in such a way as to show that the earlier books were well known at the time. Also modern discoveries in Egypt, Babylonia, and Persia, have verified in a very large number of instances the statements of these Jewish writers, thus certifying us that the books are what they profess to be,

cotemporary accounts of the events recorded. Excavations made in our own day, and inscriptions recently deciphered, supply us with proof which only prejudiced minds can contest. Many events, such as the expedition of Chedorlaomer, Gen. xiv; the exaltation of Joseph, Gen. xli; the exodus from Egypt, Ex. xii; xiv; the conquest of Palestine, Josh. vi to xi; the building of Solomon's temple with stone from Tyre, I Kin. v, vi; the rise of Omri's dynasty, I Kin. xvi; the expedition of Sennacherib against Hezekiah, II Kin. xviii; some of which have been sneered at by would be antiquarians as untrue and even impossible, are now acknowledged to be fully authenticated by collateral proofs. Moreover, as a subordinate auxiliary, philology comes in to support the same conclusion, as when we find Egyptian words in Moses, not repeated in the later books, and Persian words in Nehemiah, not introduced in the earlier, and so on. The general conclusion is that the Old Testament was written at various times from about the 15th to the 5th century B.C. The history it contains takes its commencement at the first introduction of human life on this earth, and, early documents were no doubt written and preserved so as to supply materials, but the most ancient writer of the books as we have them was Moses, who lived about 1000 years before Cyrus, and the most recent was Nehemiah, (unless the prophet Malachi was slightly later,) who lived under Artaxerxes in the fifth century B.C.

LECTURE II.

THE AUTHORS

OF THE

AVESTA AND THE BIBLE.

The person who writes a book has more influence over us, as we read it, than the age in which it was written; authorship is more important than antiquity; unless, indeed, the writer is a mere amanuensis, in which case his personality is of no moment. A father who has a message for his children may call a friend to write the message who fully appreciates it, or he may call a servant who knows nothing about the matter. In either case the message comes from the father, not from the friend or the servant. Some portions of our sacred writings in the Bible have been placed on record by human authors who were but as scribes, and searched for the meaning of the words they had written. Thus in one place we read "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me."* And in another "My tongue is the pen of a ready writer."† Other portions were fully appreciated by the

* 2 Sam. XXIII. 2.

† Ps. XLV. 1.

authors who, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, narrated their own experience, or gave the conclusions to which their own deliberations had brought them. Similarly in the Avesta some portions purport to be the transcript of words spoken by Ahura Mazda, while others are narrative or philosophy or prayer. It is specially with reference to the human element in each book that our estimate will be affected by our knowledge of the writers, their history, and their character.

THE AVESTA.

Tradition ascribes the Avesta to Zoroaster. As the tradition is ancient, and there is no counter tradition in favour of any one else, we are not justified in disputing it except for good cause. Good cause there perhaps is for maintaining that the whole is not the work of one man ; for, as I mentioned in my first Lecture, the five Gathas are in an older dialect than the rest of the book, and the reasonable supposition is that Zoroaster was the author of these Gathas, the rest being the work of some learned Zoroastrians who committed to writing what had reached them by tradition of the teaching of their great master. Last week I gave you a quotation from the Gatha Ustvaiti showing that it claims to be of Zoroaster's own composition. Here is the heading prefixed to the first Gatha, the Gatha Ahunavaiti, which applies to them all and embodies the current tradition with respect to them, for it is in the ordinary Avesta dialect, not in that of the Gathas themselves.—“Good is the thought, good the speech, good the work, of the pure Zarathushtra. May

the Amesha Spentas accept the Gathas. Praise be to you pure songs."

The life of Zarathushtra is therefore of interest, and in some respects what we are told of him touches our estimate of his teaching. I will give you a brief summary of the narrative, omitting discussion of his date. Zoroaster was born in Western Iran, in the neighbourhood of Lake Urumiah; his family name was Spitama, from Spitam, one of his ancestors; he had four brothers. At his birth he laughed aloud, and nature joined in the rejoicing. During his infancy his life was repeatedly attempted: an assassin who tried to stab him was hindered from doing so by a sudden stroke of paralysis, his hand being withered; another attempt was made by fire; another was by leaving him to be eaten by a wolf; and again he was exposed to be trampled by oxen, and by horses; but in every case he was miraculously rescued. The story of the first ten years of his life was recorded in the Spend Nask, which is unfortunately lost; but the incidents are given in Pahlavi literature. At the age of 15 he assumed the Kusti,* and then spent the next 25 years mainly in religious preparation for the great

* "The Kusti or Kosti is the religious girdle of the Parsees, which has to be bound and unbound many times daily, and always with the recitation of prayers. It is made of white wool woven, and in size is not larger than a lady's boot-lace or stay-lace, but its length is sufficient to go round the waist three times. It must be worn by men and women alike, but children do not receive it until the seventh year." Note in Spiegel's *Avesta*: III, 4.

work that lay before him. At the age of 20 he left his home for meditation and reflection, and wandered much and far, making it one chief aim to show compassion on the poor and on animals. During this period his father sought a wife for him, and he proved his superiority to custom by requesting that she should show her face before marriage. He still more decidedly exercised an independant choice for good when he was told in open assembly that the deeds most favorable for the soul are to nourish the poor, give fodder to cattle, bring wood to fire, pour Hom juice into water, and worship demons. He consented to the first four, but utterly refused the demons. At the age of 30 he received the first revelation ; that year is called "the year of the Religion." He was journeying with some others to Iran ; his journey commenced the last day of the month Spendarmat, *i. e.* the day before the vernal equinox ; and on the 45th day of his journey, at dawn, he saw a colossal figure, nine times as large as a man, coming towards him ; it was the archangel Vohuman (Good Thought,) bearing in his hand a glossy staff. He bade Zoroaster lay aside his garment, *i. e.* his body, and then led his enraptured soul into the presence of Ahura Mazda and the Amesha Spentas. There he offered homage to the heavenly beings before him, and was instructed in the cardinal doctrines of the faith, and was shown various marvellous signs. His two next years were occupied by teaching the priests, the Kavis and Karpans, who are blind and deaf to the truth, and are sentenced to perdition when they come

to the Chinvat Bridge. He then visited a king whose nobles clamored for his death, but the king protected him from them ; nevertheless as the king refused the teaching he was cursed. Then he came to a ruler who begged for some of his holy water ; the ruler's name was Parshat ; Zoroaster required him to praise righteousness, curse the demons, and profess the faith. Parshat did the two former, but not the last, and Zoroaster refused him the water but cured a bull with it instead.

At various times during the ten years after his first revelation he had six more visions, one with each Amesha Spenta in turn.

1. Vohuman entrusted to him the care of useful animals.
2. Asha Vahista gave him guardianship of fire.
3. Khshathra Vairya made him keeper of metals.
4. Spenta Armaiti charged him with frontiers, stations, and settlements.
5. Haurvatat instructed him about the care of water.
6. Ameretat put plants under his care.

Other visions also were granted to the prophet, and he was appointed Lord of earthly beings.* His wisdom and exaltation did not exempt him from

* According to the Huzvaresh Commentary, the Lord of the heavenly is Ahura Mazda, the Lord of the earthly Zarathushtra, the Lord of the water creatures is Khar-mahi the fish, whose duty it is to take care of the Hom tree, and thus make the Resurrection possible ; the Lord of the beasts is the ermine ; and the Lord of the birds is the bird Karshipta. Note in Spiegel's Avesta : II. 7.

opposition on the part of the evil spirits, who did their utmost to kill or corrupt him. Angra Mainyus sent a fiend to smite him, but he recited the Ahuna Vairya,* and the fiend fled from him. An additional means of vanquishing the evil spirit was hurling stones as big as a house. Then Angra Mainyus himself confronted him and tempted him to renounce Mazdeism ; he triumphed in that encounter also. There came another temptation by a fiend in woman's form ; he discovered the disguise, and exorcised the fiend.

In the course of his wanderings the first man he converted by his preaching was his own cousin Metyomah, and for two years he gained no other convert. His efforts during this time were specially devoted to the conversion of king Vishtaspa ; for this he prayed to Ardvi Sura, the goddess of waters. Two kings to whom he preached on his way to Vishtaspa refused to accept his teaching ; for this they were lifted on high by a mighty wind, and birds tore their flesh from their bones. At Vishtaspa's court there was a terrible conflict with the wise men, but they were vanquished in a three days' controversy: Zoroaster then disclosed the king's secret thoughts, whereupon the priests accused him of witchcraft, and he was cast into prison. He gained his release by

* This often repeated formula is as follows :—

As is the will of the Lord, so is he the Ruler out of purity.

From Vohu-mano will one receive gifts for the works which one does in the world for Mazda.

And the kingdom we give to Ahura when we afford succour to the poor.

miraculously curing the king's favorite horse ; this horse became paralysed in all four legs, and Zoroaster promised to restore them if the king would promise four things, one for each leg. The four things were ;—(1) acceptance of the faith ; (2) enrolment of the prince Isfendiar as warrior on behalf of the faith ; (3) conversion of the queen also ; (4) execution of the priests who had falsely accused him. Vishtaspa accepted the terms, and when the horse was cured he carried out his engagements ; he then asked four boons in return, which were ;—(1) the sight of the place he should occupy in heaven ; (2) invulnerability ; (3) immortality ; (4) universal knowledge. All four were granted, but not all to him ; he might have the first one ; his son Isfendiar the second ; another son Peshotan the third ; and the chief minister obtained all knowledge. The religion then became the national religion, and as toleration was unknown many men were put to death for refusing to adopt it. Subsequently the faith was carried to other lands, as far as Rum (Europe) Westwards, and India Eastwards. Mobeds were sent as Missionaries, but there is an ominous mention of conflicts and bloodshed, so that we cannot take their Mission to have been a peaceful one ; they were supported by the conquering sword of Isfendiar and his uncle Zarir. This is not mentioned in the Avesta itself but in the later Pahlavi writings ; whether it be true or not, it shows the spirit that was felt to be Zoroastrian when these writings were issued, for there is no hint that such proceedings were reprehensible. A Brahman sage, and afterwards another Indian, also a wise

and learned man from Greece, heard the fame of Zoroaster, and came to dispute with him and refute his errors, but he was inspired to answer their enquiries, and they were convinced of his truth, joined him as disciples, and went back to spread Mazdeism in their own countries. For 15 years Zoroaster was engaged in founding fire temples and otherwise organising and extending his religion; he also taught medicine and other useful accomplishments.

During the last 20 years of his life frequent wars were waged for the faith. The Yashts name eight foes who were vanquished by Vishtaspa or Zarir; the details are lost. Besides these, two wars were waged against Arjet Aspa, a Turanian; in the first Zarir, and in the second Isfendiar, takes the chief place. They were religious wars. The first was begun through Vishtaspa's zeal for his new faith. Arjet Aspa, who was his suzerain and received tribute from him, rejected Mazdeism, and demanded that he should do the same; but instead of yielding to this demand Vishtaspa, at Zoroaster's instance, withheld his accustomed tribute, and hurled defiance at Arjet Aspa. The result was an invasion of Iran by the Turanians, and two pitched battles were fought. Zarir was killed by treachery during the conflict, and 22 of Vishtaspa's sons fell; but in the end Arjet Aspa fled to his land pursued by Isfendiar. Afterwards while Vishtaspa was absent from his capital, Arjet Aspa invaded and captured it, and extinguished the sacred fire. Isfendiar gallantly retrieved the day, and Arjet Aspa was again driven back, but alas! Zoroaster was among the slain. He

was fatally wounded while engaged in prayer. He returned the blow by flinging his rosary at his assailant with such force that it killed him on the spot.

Zoroaster had three wives, who survived him; he had three sons and three daughters. His third wife bare him no children naturally, but in a miraculous way she is yet to be the mother of the Saviour who will come and put an end to evil.

The miracles in this story it is easy to put aside as myth or poetical invention or the like, but there is no true philosophy in refusing credence to every thing that we choose to call miraculous, irrespective of the evidence for it. In weighing the evidence for these miracles however, it should be borne in mind that they are not in the Avesta itself. Thus the episode of the black horse only appears in the Zartusht Namah, a Persian work of the 15th century A. D., though it is alluded to in the Pahlavi Dinkart. The only miracles narrated of Zoroaster in the Avesta apart from visions and revelations, are that plants and trees rejoiced at his birth, and that he vanquished the fiends by throwing, or threatening to throw, enormous stones.

THE BIBLE.

As the Bible was written at various times, extending from first to last through about 1600 years, it was of course the work of many different authors. I will mention some of them; some are unknown by name,

Moses was the author of the first five books, which contain a brief sketch of the history of mankind from the commencement to about the 20th century B. C., then a fuller memoir of the family history of Abraham, a Hebrew chief, through four generations. Abraham's great grandson, Joseph, was promoted by one of the kings of Egypt to be ruler over that whole land. An interval of some generations is then passed over almost in silence, until, under another dynasty in Egypt, the descendants of Abraham appear as a nation, the nation of Israel, held in bondage and cruelly oppressed. Then Moses was born, and of him we have a more detailed account than of any that preceded him, and the laws and regulations he gave the people are set out at length. Shortly before the birth of Moses, the king had ordered that all the male infants among the Israelites should be put to death. This order Moses' parents disobeyed, and when they could no longer hide him in their house, they placed him among the reeds by the river's edge; there he was found by the king's daughter, who adopted and educated him as heir to the throne. He thus united princely position and learning with Hebrew origin and sympathy. He spent 40 years at the court, and then, having too hastily shown his intention of procuring his people's release from bondage, he fled and spent another 40 years in lowliness as a shepherd's assistant in the land of Midian, so that his character as well as his attainments became fitted for the work before him. At the age of 80 a vision of God was given him, and he was sent to king Pharaoh to demand emancipation for

Israel. Pharaoh refused; and in consequence a series of plagues was sent upon Egypt, and the Israelites were brought into readiness by expectation and preparation extended over some months. At length the Exodus was accomplished in the midst of miracles, the chief of them all being one which the Jews have annually commemorated ever since. The eldest son in every Egyptian house was stricken to death one night, but the Israelites escaped this infliction by having the blood of a lamb sprinkled upon their door posts. The angel of death was charged to pass over every house where the blood was thus sprinkled, and the commemorative feast was called the Passover. Christians are taught to recognise this as a type, or object lesson, showing that we are delivered from death through the blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. After leaving Egypt the people of Israel were conducted by Moses through the wilderness of Mount Sinai to the border of the land which was promised them, and which to this day they look upon as their own. All through their wanderings in that wilderness Moses was their leader and their prophet, bringing them revelations from God; but one grand revelation was uttered by God's own voice, while Moses was required to stand aside; this was the Moral Law or Ten Commandments. Moses lived to the age of 120 years, and then died, just before the people entered upon their promised inheritance. He was not allowed to lead them into it, because he had transgressed God's commandment in twice striking the rock, from which water had been

brought to satisfy the people's thirst. The command Moses received was to strike the rock once only ; afterwards he was to speak to it ; the rock typified Jesus Christ, who supplies our souls' thirst ; He was smitten once only, as it is written in the New Testament " Christ was once for all offered to bear the sins of many."

The next book of the Bible is about Joshua's conquest of the promised land, and was probably written by him, but it is anonymously edited. Then follow several other historical books which are anonymous : they were compiled from the national records. The two latest of the historical books belong to the reign of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, in the 5th century B.C., and the two authors, Ezra and Nehemiah, have given their names and written in the first person. Both of them occupied high positions under the Persian king, and were fully qualified for the work they had to do. Their narratives are non-miraculous.

The next books of the Bible are Poetical, and are partly anonymous ; portions have the author's name attached. The leading poet was king David, whose life was marked by great vicissitudes, which have left their mark upon his writings. In early life he was a shepherd boy, tending his father's flocks, and the Psalms he then wrote have for their theme the beauties and marvels of nature. He was introduced to court life, and became a commander of the army ; but the king took a dislike to him, sought to kill him, set a price upon his head, and did his best to pursue and

capture him. The Psalms then written breathe a spirit of conscious innocence under persecution. After the death of that king, David himself ascended the throne, and his successful military expeditions give a tone of triumph to the Psalms of that period. He fell into sin, was guilty of adultery and murder, and, though he was forgiven, his life was deeply embittered, so that penitence and humility mark the Psalms of his old age. These four types of lyrical composition make the book of Psalms a treasure to Christian hearts ; and the second type, conscious innocence, is specially suited to express the experience of our Lord Jesus Christ : He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, while he was innocent of every sin.

After the Poetical books we have books written by 16 different Prophets, who have all attached their names to their writings. I will specify only one ; the prophet Daniel. The Jews were carried away captive to Babylon, and Daniel as a youth was among the captives. His royal birth, combined with his ability and faithfulness, commended him to the king, and he rose to high station, so that he had much opportunity of promoting the interests of his fellow-countrymen, and influencing them in the way of loyalty to their king and to their God. In Daniel's old age Cyrus conquered Babylon, and under his viceroy, Darius, Daniel became first minister of the realm. Darius issued a decree against offering prayer to any god or man except himself ; but Daniel honored God before the king, and disregarded the decree ; hence he incurred the penalty,

which was to be thrown into a den of lions ; the lions however were restrained from touching him, and Daniel was taken up the next morning out of the den unharmed, "because he believed in his God." Thus Daniel is in some measure the counterpart of Moses : he combined Jewish nationality and sympathy with high position under the greatest monarchy of his time ; only his share in the world's greatness came at the end of his life instead of at the beginning. His writings include, besides the narrative of events in his own life and in that of his friends, visions of the great monarchies of the world from his own day on to the end of time. He prophesied that the Babylonian empire should be succeeded by the Medo-Persian, and that by the Greek, and that again by a more terrible power which proved to be the Roman. This last empire he declared should be broken up into kingdoms, such as we see at the present time in Europe ; and the next sweeping change is to be the establishment of the universal kingdom of Jesus Christ over the whole world.

After an interval of about 5 centuries the authors of the New Testament began to write. The New Testament consists of 27 books, and we know the authors of all but one. These authors are eight in number ; four of them wrote the historical portion, and one of these with the four others wrote the didactic portions. All the eight wrote from personal acquaintance and communion with Jesus Christ, or under the guidance of those who had such acquaintance. It would detain you too long to tell you what

is known of all those writers, but as one of the number occupies quite an exceptional position I will give you a brief account of him. His name is Paul. He wrote epistles both to churches and to individuals. He was born in Tarsus of Cilicia, one of the chief seats of learning in the Roman world, and inherited the privilege of being a Roman citizen. He was educated partly in his native city, and partly in Jerusalem, and his ambition was to take a leading place among the Jews for zeal and learning. When persecution broke out against the Christians, and the first martyr was put to death, this young enthusiast took a prominent part in the executions ; and he proceeded to carry on the persecution with fierceness both in Jerusalem and in other places, even as far as to Damascus, a city which the political movements of the time had placed in some sort of dependance upon Jerusalem. The young man perceived clearly enough that his position of antagonism to Christianity was utterly untenable if Jesus Christ, as his followers alleged, was really alive from the dead ; but he disbelieved this allegation with his whole heart, and felt that he ought to oppose the superstition to the utmost of his power. He hated the Christians, and sought to convince or slay them, so as to stamp out their heresy. As he approached Damascus, about mid-day, he saw a light above the brightness of the sun, and heard a voice speaking to him. He fell on his face and asked the glorious visitant who he was. It was Jesus. Then the teaching of the Christians was true ! Jesus was alive and in glory. Jesus

was the Christ of whom all the ancient prophets had written. Jesus was the Son of God. Jesus was the Saviour of mankind. The persecutor was changed in a moment; and from that time he gave himself to preach the faith which until then he had sought to destroy. It was no slight change for him. He had to relinquish all his hopes of becoming a leader among the Rabbis at Jerusalem. His own description of the sacrifice, and of his willingness to make it for what he now knew to be the truth, is given in these glowing words;—"What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith; that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."¶ In Damascus the Jew who had come to persecute the Christians brought persecution on himself by preaching Christ in the synagogue. He returned to Jerusalem, and there also the Jews sought to kill him. He retired for a season to his home at Tarsus; and when he left it again, it was to join with four other Christian ministers in taking charge of the Church at

¶Phil. 3. 7-11.

Antioch in Syria. There the Spirit called him, with one other, and sent him forth to commence the great work of declaring the Gospel to the nations. He made first a circuit of the districts in the neighbourhood of Antioch; then another wider circuit a year or two later, during which he began to write epistles to the churches he had founded; he started from Ephesus, the chief city of proconsular Asia, and made a third circuit through Northern and Central Greece, writing to different churches at different places. In the course of his journeyings he experienced many privations and disappointments; he knew what it was to suffer want, and what it was to be dependant upon his own manual labor for the supply of the necessities of life. While a lad in his father's house, he had learnt the tent making trade, and when other resources failed he earned his living by working at this trade. He records also that revelations were vouchsafed to him, besides that first one which converted him from his opposition to Christianity; and on one occasion he was caught up into heaven, whether disembodied or not he could not tell, and heard unspeakable words which it was not lawful for him to utter. During his travels after leaving Ephesus, he gathered contributions from the Greek Churches for the poor saints at Jerusalem; but when he reached that city he was arrested on a false charge by the Jews, who handed him over to the Romans; no miracle was wrought for his release; he was kept in prison for over two years and then sent to Rome; two more years he

remained there in bonds, after which he was acquitted and released. He resumed his preaching, travelling, and writing epistles, until at length, after the Emperor Nero had made Christianity penal, he was again arrested, sent to Rome, condemned, and executed.

In this Apostle we have the one thing which was wanting among the disciples of Jesus Christ until he joined them ; we have an educated, able, honest opponent convinced that Christian teaching was the truth, that it was the complement of Judaism, and that all the types and shadows of the Jewish ceremonial worship pointed forward to Jesus Christ as their great anti-type. His experience brought him into contact with different phases of thought, Greek and Asiatic ; and his epistles show how one phase after another came into prominence at successive stages in his career. Those he wrote during his second Missionary circuit are mainly occupied with personal and practical religion ; they tell of the second coming of Jesus Christ to judge the world, not as the consummation of his glory, but rather as our incentive to wait and work with faithfulness and hopefulness. Those he wrote shortly before his imprisonment in Jerusalem speak of Christianity mostly as a saving religion, assuring us of God's love, and moving us to live as God's children should live one with another. Those he wrote from Rome during his two years' imprisonment there are full of Christian Imperialism. Being at the center of the Roman empire he had learnt more fully to appreciate the great difference between individual citizenship or even provincial inte-

rests, and the wider, grander conception that embraces the whole world in its purview ; and this he applied to the Church of Christ, speaking of it as realising the purpose of God formed before the world was created, and standing in relation to Christ himself as the body to the head ; and that Head is supreme over all things in heaven and earth, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers. Thus we find that Paul's early life and mature experience eminently qualified him for the work he had to do as an Apostle, and author of those Epistles which teach so much of the philosophy of Christ's religion.

Something of the same sort may be traced in the other writers of the New Testament ; but their individuality is less prominently stamped upon their writings, and I will not detain you with any further account of them.

In comparing the Avesta with the Bible in this matter of Authorship, the first thought that may strike you is perhaps the greater indistinctness which surrounds the question in the case of the Avesta. We cannot take it all to be the work of Zoroaster ; it is not perfectly certain that any of it is directly from his pen ; in any case we do not know how much to ascribe to him, nor can we say when or by whom the remainder was written. Such indistinctness almost entirely disappears when we turn to the Bible ; only a few sections, and those not at all the most important, are veiled in uncertainty. Another significant difference between the two books is the much greater variety of style and matter that appears in

the Bible. Not indeed that the number of writers was greater; that may or may not have been so; but the writers of the Avesta, however many or few they were, all wrote as representing Zoroaster; the writers of the Bible wrote as ministers of the Lord, each retaining his own individuality; one was a prince, one a warrior, another was a judge, another was a king who had risen from lowly life, another was a king born to the purple, another was a rustic, another a priest, another a prime minister; and proceeding with the list we come to a publican, a physician, a fisherman, and what we should call in the language of our own day a graduate. A third contrast I will point out, perhaps the most important of all; the great prophet of Zoroastrianism is the reputed author of at least a portion of the Avesta, and other portions are given forth in his name as if he had written them; but Jesus Christ wrote no book; he spoke, and others wrote; there is not one epistle or writing of any kind throughout the New Testament which comes to us as from his pen. And the same is true of the Old Testament with one single exception,—he wrote the Ten Commandments. He first uttered them in a voice which was heard over all the camp of the Israelites, and then he gave Moses two tables of stone on which he had graven these Commandments with his own finger. What the Apostle Paul says of the human element in his preaching of the Gospel is true of the sacred writings also,—“We have this treasure in earthen vessels;” and the purpose is the same—“that the excellency of

the power may be of God and not of us."* We ascribe no intrinsic power to the book as a book, nor to the repetition of any forms contained in it, the power we feel in it is that of the Spirit of God, who has given it to us, and who carries its teaching in upon our hearts.

LECTURE III.

THE COSMOGONY

OF THE

AVESTA AND THE BIBLE.

We now come to the contents of the two sacred books. Not the chronology, and not the authorship, but the contents, must supply us with tests by which to decide between the two "rival creeds". If the result of comparing them is to show that each book lies outside the range of the other, if *i. e.* the two are independent and supplementary, we may be able to accept both, and the Creeds that rest upon them may be colleagues not rivals. But if there are irreconcilable differences between the two lines of teaching, we must acknowledge that if one is right the other is wrong. As a matter of fact there are differences between the two, utterly irreconcilable; and consequently the investigation to which I invite you is no mere academic

* 2 Cor. IV, 7.

amusement; it is of importance beyond all earthly enquiries: your very life depends on your decision.

A religion that will reach our hearts, and enable us to stand firmly and fearlessly when this world fails us, must give some account of the origin of the world. For the world is a great fact, and any mere transcendental philosophy, which gives no explanation of how it came into being will leave us in doubt as to whether there be not a Creator higher and stronger than our philosophic deity or deities; and that will involve doubt also as to whether this unknown Creator will not interfere with his creation again and bring terrible things to pass, for which we are wholly unprepared. The supreme God must be Creator of the universe, or else he is not in any true sense supreme. Contemplate for a moment the position of Henotheists: and by Henotheism I mean the worship of one God only, while it is acknowledged that other people may be right to worship a different god. How can Henotheists have any assurance that one of those other gods, whom they reject, will not rise up and overthrow the one they have chosen? If by any means we are assured of this, and we know that the one God whom we worship is supreme over all others, so that we need not fear their interference, we are in effect denying that those others are gods at all; we are Monotheists. To confirm us then in our Monotheism we must have the assurance that our God whom we worship is Creator of the universe: hence this subject of Cosmogony is one that affects the deepest feelings of our hearts, and

not one that simply prolongs into the distant past an interesting antiquarian enquiry. This is clearly recognised in the Bible. It teaches us that the Creation is cause for praising God. Here is a sample; "Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty: who coverest thyself with light as with a garment; who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain; who laid the foundations of the earth that it should not be removed for ever. I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being." * The same thought is brought forward as a reason for a man in trouble acknowledging that there is wisdom at the back of his troubles; they have not come without good cause. "Then answered the Lord unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said Gird up thy loins now like a man, I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. Will thou also disannul my judgment, wilt thou condemn me that thou mayest be righteous? Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?" † And the appeal continues, instancing one portion of creation after another as ground for trustfulness in the wisdom and power of God. The same sure confidence is set before us more briefly in many passages of the Bible, e. g. in the 1st Epistle of S. Peter:—"Let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator." §

* Psalm CIV, 1, 2, 5, 33. † Job XL, 6-9. § 1 Pet. IV, 19.

But then if Creation is revealed, the alleged facts connected with it must bear rigorous investigation; they must be absolutely true. Modern science here comes in and supplies a test, a test of a very different kind from what is supplied by ancient authorities on a point of history. Herodotus or some other historian may relate certain occurrences as facts. The Avesta or the Bible may have statements inconsistent with those narratives. The contradiction we perceive between the authorities does not of itself furnish us with grounds for deciding against the sacred book; Herodotus may be wrong; he was not infallible. It is otherwise with physical science. Thus, modern discovery has established the fact that the earth rolls round the sun in a vast annual orbit, drawing the moon with it: if any book, whether accounted sacred or not, asserts the contrary, we shall unhesitatingly condemn that book as ignorantly written, and therefore as not coming to us with the authority of the Creator : it is fallible, it is human, it is wrong.

THE AVESTA.

In the Vendidad, and again in the Khordah Avesta, there is an account of Creation. In each Ahura Mazda is the Creator, and in each the account is uttered from himself; but in the former, Angro Mainyus shares in the work, or rather opposes it, by counter creations. Elsewhere frequently Ahura Mazda is styled Creator, and in the Ormazd Yasht, where Ahura Mazda declares his own names, one of them is Creator. But frequently also this title is given with some qualification: thus in

Vendidad II. 129, and elsewhere, he is addressed as "Creator of the corporeal world." In Yasna XVII. 3, he is called "Creator of the good creatures." In Yasna XXXVII, 1, 2, we read "Ahura Mazda who has created the cattle, who has created purity, the water, and the good trees, who created the splendor of light, the earth, and all good"; and so on.

The account of creation in the 1st Fargard of the Vendidad is as follows.—"The first and best of regions and places have I created, I who am Ahura Mazda, the Airyana Vaeja of the good creation. Then Angro Mainyus, who is full of death, created an opposition to the same, a great serpent, and winter which the Daevas have created. The second and best of regions and places have I created"—and so the account continues giving 16 names of places, alternating with 16 evil creations of Angro Mainyus. These evil creations are:—

1. A great serpent and winter.
2. A wasp (or pestilence), which is very deadly to the cattle and fields.
3. Evil reports (or war and pillage).
4. Devouring beasts (or buzzing insects), and poisonous plants.
5. Unbelief.
6. Slothfulness (or Hail), and poverty.
7. The worship of idols.
8. Evil defilement (or Devastation).
9. Wicked inexpressible deeds.
10. The burying of corpses.

11. Sorcery.
12. Wicked monstrous doubt.
13. The burning of the dead.
14. Wicked signs (menstruation), and un-Arian plagues of the region.
15. Wicked tokens, and wicked heat (irregular fevers).
16. Winter and hoar frost (snow and earthquakes).

It will be observed that the world as created by Ahura Mazda, if it had remained unmarred by Angro Mainyus, would have had no winter in it.

The other account of Creation is given in the Aferin Gahanbar of the Khordah Avesta, and is as follows.—

“ In 45 days have I Ahura Mazada, together with the Amshaspands, produced, *viz.* I have created the heaven.”—

“ In 60 days have I Ahura Mazda, together with the Amshaspands, created the water.”—And with a similar form of words we are told that the earth was created in 75 days; the trees in 50 days; the cattle in 80 days; and mankind in 75 days.

It is not easy to reconcile these two accounts; but according to Mr. Karaka there is no need to try, for the 16 portions of the good creation named in the Vendidad are only the countries then known in which the Zoroastrian religion had been propagated: in other words, there is nothing here about creation at all. But then are the 16 productions of Angro Mainyus regions in which the Zoroastraian religion had not been propagatèd! Mr. Karaka seems to have saved

the Vendidad from contradicting the Aferin Gahanbar at the expense of making it inconsistent or meaningless. But the Vendidad account is supported by no less an authority than the Gathas, for they also declare that Angro Mainyus was joint Creator with Ahura Mazda; though the language is a little obscure. Thus we read in the Gatha Ahunavaiti, "both these heavenly beings, the twins, gave first of themselves to understand both, the good and the evil, in thoughts, words, and works; rightly do the wise distinguish between them, not so the imprudent. When both these heavenly beings came together, in order to create at first life and perishability, and as the world should be at last: the evil for the bad, the best Spirit for the pure."

Moreover if we are to make a distinction between the several portions of the Avesta, and prefer one part to another, the Vendidad is the part that claims to stand highest, as most deserving of confidence. For these words occur in the 5th Fargard;—

"Creator, how is the greatness, goodness, and beauty in this Zarathushtrian law given against the Daevas (i. e. the Vendidad), which is great, and beautiful, above all other words? Then answered Ahura Mazda; Similarly, O holy Zarathushtra, is this Zarathushtrian law given against the Daevas above all other words in greatness, goodness, and beauty, as the sea Vouru Kasha is higher than other waters, as the greater waters flow superior to the lesser, as the greater trees surpass the smaller, as the heavens are around this earth."

But now how will the Avesta story in either of its forms bear comparison with the truths of modern discovery? Before attempting to answer that question, let me briefly describe what has been discovered as to the process of creation; I mean as to the stages of advance through which cosmical matter has reached its present condition.

Advance implies some starting point, some initial stage from which the advance is made. And the entrance upon this initial stage, the actual coming into existence of matter, is confessedly beyond the reach of Scientific study. We must begin with matter existing, and acknowledge that the creative act of calling it into existence is supra-scientific. Natural phenomena are open to our study; they are perceived to be under regulation; they are not hap hazard and inconsequent: the regular sequences are called Laws; and reason compels the admission that some higher power, whether we call it God or invent some other term, originated those Laws, and carries them into operation. Our study, if it is truly scientific and not vaguely subjective, must be confined to those Laws, and the sequences they necessitate, and all we can infer about the higher power is that He is, and that He energises; that He set the course of nature in motion, and therefore unquestionably can arrest or alter it at his will.

Commencing then with created matter, to trace it from its earliest condition onwards, we discover it in the first instance very widely extended,

very attenuated, and very intensely agitated in the way of molecular vibration. The matter which now constitutes our sun and planets extended from the centre outwards to a distance beyond what is now the orbit of the outermost planet; and this vast space was not occupied by separate balls or masses at great distances from each other, but was wholly filled up; for the matter was so attenuated as to spread continuously through the whole of it. Now if a piece of metal is subjected to heat of sufficient intensity it becomes liquid, and loses much of its tenacity: increase the intensity of the heat, and the liquid will become gaseous, and lose all its tenacity, and at the same time its form. At the period of which I am speaking, the very remote past, all cosmical matter was in this condition, intensely heated and intensely agitated. And another conception must be added. When a piece of metal, as iron, is heated more and more, it becomes more and more brightly luminous up to a certain point, and then the luminosity fades; a still greater degree of heat will make it lose its luminosity altogether and become dark again. The cause of this is that our eyes are capable of perceiving light only within a narrow range of about one octave; (to borrow a familiar term from music). When the sun's rays are broken up by a prism, our eyes can perceive the red, the yellow, the blue, and the violet; but nothing beyond; yet there are rays beyond; there are rays both below the red and above the violet. But the infra-red rays are agitated too gently to wake up the sensation of vision, and the supra-violet are agitated too violently.

Our range of vision is limited between red and violet. The cosmical matter as first created was agitated with such intensity that it was supra-violet; it was dark. Intense heat and wide extension are cause and effect: the hotter any substance is, especially in the gaseous form, the more widely it extends, because the molecules of which it is composed are more violently in motion, and so are occupying a larger space. This large attenuated nebulous mass was subject to a motion of rotation, and probably also to a motion of translation; but the latter we may leave out of account, as not affecting its subsequent development, and confine our attention to its internal agitation. The first change that took place, the change that must have commenced at once, is that cooling set in; heat was radiated off into space, and the mass began to shrink. As it shrank, another alteration took place; the rotation increased in rapidity: and this occasioned a centrifugal tendency in the outer portion. Whether the mass in its original condition was wider in its equatorial measurement than in its polar ^{it} or not, whether it was more nearly orange-shaped or lozenge-shaped, we cannot say: rotation made it lozenge-shaped if it was not so at first: and then centrifugal force caused an outer portion, perhaps a ring, to separate off from the shrinking central mass, and enter upon a distinct existence of its own, dependant upon the central mass but isolated from it. This process was repeated again and again, and the central orb became furnished with a number of secondaries;

these are now distinguished by the names Neptune, Uranus, Saturn, and so on.

Each of these by the force of gravitation became itself a rotating orb, and in some instances its centrifugal force repeated on a smaller scale the process by which it had been separated, and the planet acquired its attendant satellite or satellites: these, as we see in the case of Saturn, might be rings at first, breaking continuity afterwards, and gathering into a form nearly spherical, in which case we call them Moons. Let us carry our thoughts to the time when the exterior planets had acquired their separate planetary existence, and the earth is about to be formed. Its mass, that is the mass of nebulous matter which is just about to break away and become a new planet, is still continuous with the central mass; but tension has commenced between its centrifugal force and the force of gravitation; and the centrifugal force is getting stronger and stronger as the velocity of rotation increases; which it does because the shrinking of the central mass, the sun, is still in progress. The moment the force of gravitation is overborne, the new planet breaks away from the central body, and an interval of space separates between them; the Earth has now become a secondary to the Sun. When once this separation had taken place, the interval grew wider and wider, for both the earth and the sun continued to shrink, the former more rapidly than the latter. The distance however of the earth from the centre of the sun suffered no

more change; the force of gravity which retained it in its orbit was henceforth constant, whatever further shrinkage of the sun might take place, and however many more planets might be thrown off. The earth later on threw off its own secondary; then as it cooled its atmosphere became less rarified; the aqueous vapour in it grew more dense, assumed the form of cloud, and by degrees was precipitated as water. Meantime other portions of the earth's substance were solidified, and the process of the formation of the earth as a planet was completed. For greater simplicity I have omitted one important consideration to which I must now return; the consideration of temperature, and therewith of luminosity. The original condition of our system in its nebulous state was dark through intense heat: as the heat was radiated off the outer portion of the nebula cooled more rapidly than the inner; and as soon as the cooling reached the point at which the vibrations are just within the visible spectrum, the outer edge began to glow with violet light: the light changed and grew brighter as the cooling proceeded; it assumed all the colours in succession and became what sunlight is now; then by further changes it lost its colours, the more rapidly vibrating ones before the others; it settled down into red; and at length ceased to be luminous altogether, and became as we have it now. This change in temperature and light is not so definitely connected with the process of planetary formation that we can say exactly when in the course of its formation any.

planet first assumed luminosity and when it became dark again: but we can see that the dark stage has been reached by all the existing planets; none of them is self-luminous; when they shine it is by reflected light only. But the sun is still self-luminous, that is, the fluid atmosphere around it is luminous, though not all in the same degree: what we call the Photosphere, the bright disc that is so clearly visible to our eyes, has cooled down so far as to be at the most luminous stage; but there is a surrounding layer of fluid matter which has cooled further than this and is less luminous: it can be seen only during a total eclipse, when the most luminous part is all shaded from our eyes by the moon; and there is an inner core which has not yet cooled sufficiently to be luminous at all: this dark inner core becomes apparent when the photosphere opens, and allows us to direct our gaze upon what is within; then we say there is a spot on the sun, for such is the appearance to our vision.

Now look with me at the Bible account of Creation as written in the 1st chapter of Genesis.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

There is a calm grand statement of what science acknowledges to be a necessary fact, but which lies beyond its ken. Things as we see them around us, must have had a beginning; that beginning must have been the work of a power higher than natural. So reasons science; the Bible endorses this; it was so:

there is a self-existent one, God, who originated all things. By the word of his power he originated not the material worlds only, but the supra-material setting also in which these worlds are cradled. There was a "beginning"; time is not boundlessly self-existing. God alone exists in timeless eternity, and at his own good pleasure he called time into existence: that was the "beginning". In another part of the Bible we are told that God "made the worlds": ‡ and the word used in this verse for "worlds" is not the one which means simply the material worlds; it includes the thought of extension through time. The phrase is thus explained by Dean Alford;—

"The universe, as well in its great primeval conditions,—the reaches of Space, and the ages of Time, as in all material objects and all successive events, which furnish out and people Space and Time, God made by Christ."

The material creation then, along with its temporal setting, had its origin in the creative fiat of the Almighty. It was not however in the form in which we see it now; it needed to be brought into this form, and the process was gradual. The chapter in Genesis explains the original form, and tells of the gradual process.

"The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep." Here we have exactly what modern discovery has revealed by its long con-

‡ Heb. 1, 2.

tinued and laborious study of nature. The student of the Bible has known it all along ; only that discovery has made the Bible statement clearer, and added fulness to it. "Without form" is a perfect description of a nebulous mass as contrasted with the clearly defined form of our earth at the present time. "Void" is equally applicable, when we think of the things with which the earth is now filled, rocks, water, trees, and so on: none of these things existed originally, the great nebula was void of them all: full indeed of matter in a fluid state, containing the material out of which all these should in due time be fashioned, but absolutely void of the things themselves. "And darkness was upon the face of the deep". Until recently no reason appeared for this statement; the darkness was recognised as having a spiritual meaning, as a symbol of the darkness in the human heart, but as a physical truth it seemed of small moment. But now we can recognise the suitableness and absolute truthfulness of the description, for the heat of the agitated mass was too intense for luminosity. And this agitation is expressed in the next clause.

"And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of waters."

The word here used for "moved" does not indicate any ordinary motion of translation, as those of you who can read the original Hebrew will know, it indicates a hovering, or vibratory motion; and the mention of the Spirit of God shows that the motion in question

was not a necessary condition of matter; matter might conceivably have been uniformly extended and inert; but it was made to vibrate, and thus a new condition was imparted to it; and the external power which imparted this new condition was spiritual not mechanical; it was the Spirit of God himself. The clause may be paraphrased thus; The mass of matter was not left to lie inert; the Creator from out of the spirit world communicated vibratory motion to it throughout, and that with intense activity.

Observe also the word 'waters.' There were as yet no waters in our ordinary sense of the word; but the author, the human author of this narrative, had no such variety of words at his command as we have in our modern English: we can speak of Liquid, Fluid, Watery, of Gaseous, Nebulous, Ethereal, and so on: it is not to be wondered at, nor is it any defect in the description, if we find one ancient Hebrew word doing duty for two or more of our modern words. And so in this clause, we may rightly understand by this word 'waters' what we should now call Fluid mass. The next stage, according to the teaching of science, is either the formation of light by the cooling down of the heated mass, or the separation of a secondary body to become a satellite of the primary: and our scientific students have not, so far as I know, been able to determine which of these two took place first. The Bible gives both the events, and without any hesitation as to which came first. Thus the narrative continues;—

“ And God said, Let there be light. And there was light.”

The cooling down brought light before centrifugal force brought planetary sub-division. The process by which light came was a new one. Why should cosmical matter glow with light at one temperature when it was non-luminous at a greater temperature? This variation of luminous condition in correspondence with variation of vibratory condition was part of God's creation ; there was no essential necessity about it ; God decreed it, and it came to pass. He who called matter into existence could cause it to grow luminous if it pleased him ; it did please him, and the thing was done. “ God said let there be light, and there was light. ”

And a further process following upon this was the separation of light from darkness.

“ God divided the light from the darkness.” This seems to imply that the two were mingled together at first. It was even so : the first scintillations of light were no more clearly separated from darkness than are the coruscations on the outer limb of the sun : but when the further rim of nebulous matter became fully luminous, then there was light in the presence of those rays, and darkness still reigned within. The separation between the two was complete.

The expression in the 5th verse, “ And the evening and the morning were the first day,” is more literally,—And there was evening, and there was morning ; day the first. The meaning is obscure, except

this far, that we can see the word Day does not here refer to the rotation of the earth on its axis in the presence of the sun, for such rotation had not yet commenced : and so it is a mistake to charge the Bible, as is sometimes done, with saying that the six days in which God made heaven and earth were six days in our ordinary sense of the word : the meaning of Day is Period of time.

The sixth verse of the chapter carries us on to the separation of the planets from the central mass ; or rather, to the separation of the earth from the mass interior to its orbit : for the formation of the other planets is passed over in silence. The Bible is given for terrestrial readers only, not for denizens of other worlds.

“ God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And it was so ”. I have already explained to you that waters is a term not to be understood of the liquid substance we call by that name, but is to be taken as including all that we might mean by Fluid mass. And now a further correction must be introduced into our English version in respect of the word Firmament. The Greek translators of the Bible were all at sea as to the meaning of the original Hebrew, and they used a Greek word which seemed to imply that the heavens above us are a solid vault. The Hebrew word has no such signification, indeed it has almost an opposite meaning, and it is rightly rendered in the margin of our Bible, Expanse. Unfortunately the Latin translators

closely followed the Greek ; they knew no better ; and they introduced the word Firmamentum. Our English translators felt themselves on uncertain ground, and rather than introduce a new thought, which might be a new mistake, they simply Anglicised the Latin word, and made it Firmament. But the literal sense is the right one, and we may translate or paraphrase the passage thus.—God said, Let there be an expanse (an interval of space) interposed into the fluid mass, and let it divide the outer portion, which will thus become a secondary, from the mass which will remain interior to it.

The work of the third day is given in vv. 9-13.

“ God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.” Taking our place in imagination as spectators of the changes here described, we should see in the first place the “waters under the heaven” that is, the whole mass of our planet in a state of violent chaotic agitation; as cooling advances the agitation gradually subsides and liquefaction sets in, and later on solidification also, so that what had been all vapour is precipitated, some of it into water and some of it into solid substances, and when at length quiescence is attained, the water is not evenly distributed over a smooth spherical rocky centre, but it occupies hollows in an uneven rocky bed, and the surface becomes partly land and partly sea. Then when the land has been fitted for vegetable life, grasses, herbs and trees,

successively appear, and the ground is clothed with verdure.

On the fourth day the narrative continues thus;—

“God said, Let there be lights (*i. e.* luminaries) in the firmament of the heaven, to divide the day from the night. And God made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. Also stars.”

Here we have the first mention of the sun and moon as luminaries, and the first mention of day and night being divided. If the atmosphere had been so thick with clouds up to this period that the sun had never shone directly upon the ground, there might nevertheless have been luxuriant vegetable growths. Plant life needs light; but many plants are sufficiently supplied if the light is dim; and none of them require distinct separation of day from night; but as soon as sunshine began to reach the ground, day and night in our ordinary sense of the words began to alternate, and the sun and moon become luminaries. Fellow occupants of the solar system with this earth they had been before, but not luminaries for its surface. The stars also became luminaries in a feebler way, and the narrative recognises this fact just at this point. It will be observed that the word Create is not used of the work of this fourth day; the word Made is used, and also the word Set; the sun, moon, and stars, were *made* to be luminaries, which they had not been before, and were *set*, *i. e.* their special functions were appointed them.

On the fifth day "God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and let fowl fly above the earth in the open expanse of heaven."

The commencement of sentient life is here recorded ; and in the record of this fifth day's work we meet with the word Create again. Physiologists have clearly recognised that however many developments have taken place among living creatures, no mere development by natural sequence can have raised vegetable, *i. e.* organic life, to the higher level of sentient life. Some interposition of creative power was needed to accomplish this change : and it is exactly here that we meet with the word Create in the Bible narrative. A new thing was by divine power called into existence ; beings endued with sentient life made their appearance.

On the sixth day the number of living creatures was enlarged ; quadrupeds and other land animals were made, and lastly man. Man belongs to the animal kingdom as regards his bodily nature, and so his formation was on the same day with the quadrupeds ; but he is removed from the lower animals by a break just as decided as that which separates sentient from merely organic life ; and in strict accordance with this fact the word Create is here used again. Indeed the break of continuity is far greater than before, for man partakes of a higher nature than anything that is physical ; he is spiritual as well as physical ; and so the word Created is used three times over in verse 27. This introduction of

a new and higher being, one who should share with God himself in occupancy of the spiritual sphere is heralded by the startlingly grand statement of verse 26, that before the Creator proceeded to this crowning act of his creation, he held high counsel with regard it.

"God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."

The full meaning of this is drawn out in the later Scriptures, where we read that God himself took human nature and became man. Jesus was God manifest in the flesh. But to say more on this subject at present would be to leave my subject in this Lecture, which is the Cosmogony.

The enumeration of the days in the opening section of the Bible is continued on to the seventh : the seventh day was one of rest following upon the completion of the work of Creation.

"God rested on the seventh day from all his work which he created and made."

And in consequence he blessed that day, and not only blessed but sanctified it, i. e. commanded his people to observe it as a holy day : as it is written in the 20th chapter of Exodus, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day : wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."

There are some features of similarity between this Bible narrative and the Khordah Avesta which it is

worth while noticing. The Vendidad version is totally different. In both the Bible and the Khordah Avesta the work is apportioned into six sections ; in both the subsequent national calendar is grounded on this apportionment ; and in both vegetable life is represented as preceding animal life, while man occupies the last place in the succession. Beyond this I can see little resemblance between them ; nor is there much basis for comparison of the Avesta story with modern discoveries. But the Bible is not only in accordance with these discoveries, it has anticipated them, and has given us from the first in popular language what scientific students are only now learning to understand.

LECTURE IV

THE THEOLOGY

OF THE

AVESTA AND THE BIBLE.

The subject to which I now invite your attention is not one that can be brought to the test of scientific discovery, nor to any other direct and objective test, it must be left to every man to decide for himself, when he has heard the arguments that can be adduced on

the one side and on the other. Such is the case even with respect to the existence of God: if any man has had the arguments for the existence of God, fairly set before him, and still in his own heart decides for atheism he must be left to his choice: he will indeed change his mind when he stands before the judgment seat of the Almighty; but it will be too late then to avoid the consequences of his wrong decision. Or if any man has had the arguments in favour of Monotheism fairly set before him, and deliberately rejects them, determining for himself to acknowledge many gods, there is nothing more to be said, he must be left to take the consequences of his decision. And in the same way, if after hearing the various arguments that can be adduced, one man says, I believe in one God who is one only Person, and has commanded us to say the Kalima; and another says, I believe in one God who shared the work of creation with an evil spirit who is his twin; and another says, I believe in one God who is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; each must be left to his own choice: those who have rejected Jesus Christ will indeed change their minds when they see that he is the appointed Judge of all mankind, but it will be too late then to enrol themselves among his followers and be admitted to his blessing.

Theology then is a matter upon which each one must decide for himself; but it is not at all a matter upon which different decisions may be maintained as equally right: it is not like the question which of two scents is the sweeter, or which of two melodies

is the more beautiful: nor is it one upon which valid arguments are wanting; so that a man might say, I have nothing to guide me in coming to a decision, and so I maintain it is of no consequence whether I come to a decision or not. There are many and cogent arguments, if men will but listen to them. It is refusal to listen, it is determining to let things go on as they are because it is too much trouble to listen, that leaves men in the dark; and so some continue to acknowledge 300 million gods, and make images of their favourite ones; some, though they despise image-worship, yet continue to invoke and adore countless beings of whose existence they have no shadow of proof; some continue to deny that the most high God takes any care for the things of men; and so in various ways, and on various pretexts, true worship of the only God is withheld.

Among the arguments that may be brought forward to decide between one system of Theology and another, some are subjective, resting upon our own sense of what is right and true concerning God and his work; some are evidential, touching the reliability of the books which teach the several systems. Arguments of the former kind are recognised in the Bible in such passages as these ;—"Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" * "I speak as to wise men, Judge ye what I say." † And perhaps the same is true of the Avesta, as in the Gatha Ahunavaiti,—“Let him hear the best with the ears, let him see the clear with the soul,

* Lu. XII 58.

† 1 Cor. X 15.

to determine the desirable, man by man, for himself." If one system of Theology represents God as unjust or unloving, and another shows that he is perfect both in justice and mercy ; if one makes him careless of our spiritual condition, of our feelings and dispositions, requiring only outward observances and repetitions of formulæ, while another teaches that he looks on the hearts and rejects mere lip service as mockery and pretence ; if one represents him as bestowing his regard only upon some particular nation or class of men, and another declares that he is the God of the spirits of all flesh, and that his love extends to the whole world : these are subjective arguments ; we may disregard or misjudge them, but we do so at our peril. Our minds are constituted so as to be able to form a right judgment on such points, and we shall be held responsible for our decision. It is as when a man sees a fire burning before him, he is responsible for his judgment as to whether that fire will hurt his flesh or not : if he argues, I have no sufficient evidence to show that this fire will burn my hand, and he accordingly places his hand in it, his sophistry will not save him, he will be burnt. Nay, we may go further ; if a little child who has never seen a fire before, in the innocence of his heart puts out his hand to play with the pretty flickering flame, his inexperience and harmless intention will not save him ; he will be burnt.

Other arguments that touch the reliability of the books from which we derive our theological beliefs, are such as these ;—Are there statements on other subjects,

in the one book or the other, which can be scientifically tested, and has one or the other stood the test? Is there anything in the ethical code of one or the other which is certainly prejudicial to the well-being of mankind? Are the statements of one or the other about sin, about prayer, about Judgment, inconsistent with the teaching about God? Are there prophecies in one or the other which have been historically fulfilled? One of these arguments, that which regards scientific truth, I touched upon in my last Lecture, others will come up later on, this evening my purpose is to set before you what the actual teaching of these two books is concerning the person of God.

It is a great help, in making this comparison between the two theologies, that both in the Avesta and in the Bible we read a declaration of the Name of God, as given by Himself. Here is an extract from the Ormazd Yasht.—

Then answered Ahura Mazda, My name is :—

- 1 The to be questioned ;
- 2 The gatherer ;
- 3 The spreader abroad ;
- 4 The best purity ;
- 5 All good things created by Mazda which have a pure origin ;
- 6 The understanding ;
- 7 Endowed with understanding ;
- 8 The wisdom ;
- 9 Endowed with wisdom ;
- 10 The increaser ;

- 11 Endowed with increase;
- 12 The Lord;
- 13 The most profitable;
- 14 He who is without harm;
- 15 The steadfast;
- 16 The reckoner of service;
- 17 The all observing;
- 18 The healing;
- 19 The Creator;
- 20 I bear the name Mazda.

Another list of names is given in the same Yasht; *viz.*

Protector;
Creator;
Nourisher;
Knowing;
Holiest Heavenly one;
Healing;
Most healing;
Priest;
Most priestly;
Ahura (God);
Mazda (Great wise one);
Pure;
Purest ;
Majestic;
Most majestic;
Much seeing;
Most much seeing;
Far seeing;
Most far seeing;
Watcher;

Desirer;
Protector;
Knower;
Most knowing;
Augmentor;
Possessing increasing Manthras; probably some
portion of the holy writings.
Ruler at will;
Most ruling at will;
Ruling with name (*i. e.* under my own name);
Most ruling with name;
Not to be deceived;
Undeceived;
Protecting;
Tormentor of torment ;
Smiting here ;
All smiting :
All creating ;
All majestic ;
Endued with much majesty ;
Very majestic ;
Endued with very much majesty ;
Effecting profit ;
Working gain ;
Profitable ;
Strong ;
Most profitable ;
Pure ;
Great ;
Kingly ;

Most Kingly ;
Well wise ;
Well wisest ;
Far seeing.

This list of names is not free from repetitions, and it includes some titles that are elsewhere given to other beings, and several that are merely attributes. The list might be added to from other passages : thus, in the Gatha Ustavaiti, Ahura is called Friend for both worlds ; and in the Qarset Nyayis he is called Rich in love.

In the Bible we have this passage in which God declares his name ;—Moses received his command to go and bring the people of Israel out of Egypt, and made this enquiry, “ Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you ; and they shall say to me, what is his name ? what shall I say unto them ? ” § the answer is,—God said unto Moses, “ I AM THAT I AM ; ” and he said, “ Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. ” Further on we read that God made another announcement of his name to Moses, thus—

“ The LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and

transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.”*

Elsewhere many of the attributes claimed for Ahura Mazda in the Avesta are ascribed to God in the Bible and others besides, such as these ;—

† The Almighty;

‡ The Lord our righteousness;

¶ The Father;

§ God is Love;

Now among all these attributes there are some with respect to which a wide difference is observable between the teaching of the two books. (1) Take first the thought of absolute self-existence, which is certainly essential to a true conception of the most high God. If he is not absolutely self-existent, but dependent on another, then that other and not the dependent one is the supreme God. The name I AM is of very frequent occurrence in the Bible; the Hebrew form of it (in Anglicised spelling) is JEHOVAH; and though this form occurs but seldom in our English version of the Bible, the word itself is in constant use, and our translators have shown this by rendering it “the LORD” (in capitals.) The meaning of this name is Self-existent, in the most absolute way, unconditioned by time or space or accident. The name stands in strong contrast to the name of any creature: any one of us can only

* Ex. XXXIV, 5-7. † Rev. 1, 8 ‡ Jer. XXIII, 8. ¶ 1 Cor. VIII, 6. § 1 John IV, 8.

lay claim to existence in time, a very small portion of time, and in space, just one spot of the vast universe, and in entire dependence on our Maker, and subject to many and great limitations. We move, we grow, we change; and all this shows that our being is limited; and in contrast to all this God declares, "I am the LORD, I change not." § In the Avesta we have no such exalted absoluteness attributed to Ahura Mazda: on the contrary he is dependent on the Fravashis of the pure for help.

Ahura Mazda spake to the holy Zarathushtra:
I declare thus to thee, the might, strength, majesty, help, and joy of the Fravashis of the pure, the mighty, storming, how they bring help to me, how they secure assistance to me, the strong Fravashis of the pure. *

If the strong Fravashis of the pure would not afford me assistance, then there would not be here cattle and men of praiseworthy kinds, the best. †

He has himself a Fravashi;

That Fravashi of Ahura Mazda praise we, the greatest, best, fairest, strongest.

He is represented as offering prayer to Ardvi Sura (the genius of the water,) thus :—

Then he prayed her for a favour ; Give me, O good, most profitable, Ardvi Sura, spotless, that I may unite myself with the son of Pourushaspa, the pure Zarathushtra, so that he may think according to

§ Mal. III, 6.

* Farvardin Yasht.

† Id.

the law, speak according to the law, act according to the law. Then Ardvi Sura the spotless afforded him this favour, him the ever-bringing offerings, giving, offering, him who prays the female givers for a favour. *

Similarly we find him offering prayer to the Air:—

It prayed he (the Creator Ahura Mazda) for this favour; Give me, O Air, thou who workest on high, that I may smite among the creatures of Angra Mainyus, as one who appertains to Spenta Mainyus. The Air which works on high granted him this favour, as the Creator Ahura Mazda approved this. †

Also the Vendidad gives a prayer for healing as offered by Ahura Mazda:—

Thus spake Ahura Mazda, the pure; I who am the
 •Giver of good, when I created this abode, the beautiful, brilliant, admirable, saying I will go forth, I will go over; then the serpent looked at me, thereupon the serpent Angra Mainyus, who is full of death, created in regard to me 99 sicknesses, and 900, and 9000, and 99000. Therefore heal thou me, O desirable Airyama. I will give thee as a recompense 1000 horses, swift, swift running. ‡

All this is inconsistent with absolute self-existence. Moreover in the Gatha Ahunavaiti Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyus are called Twins, a term which implies derivation of being from another; and this is more

* Aban Yasht.

† Ram Yasht.

‡ Vendidad, XXII.

fully drawn out by the Armenian writer Eznik, who describes the birth of these two twins, and the gifts they severally received from their father.

(2) Another kindred thought for comparison between the two books is that God is the object of worship. His claim to our undivided worship is clearly and consistently put forward in the Bible. Mr. Karaka says, in his History of the Parsees that the adoration or worship of any object, other than Ahura Mazda, is blasphemous ; but he gives no references to show where such teaching is to be found in the Avesta. Could he have been making a mistake between the two books ?

These are some of the verses which make that claim:—

Thou shalt have no other gods before me. *

O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest between the Cherubim, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth.†

Thus saith the LORD, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer the LORD of hosts ; I am the first, and I am the last ; and beside me there is no God.§

The LORD is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king : at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation. Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens.‡

Ex. XX. 3. † 2Kin. XIX, 15. § Is. XLIV. 6. ‡ Jer. X, 10. 11

Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. * Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. †

But the Avesta speaks a different language. Praise and worship are certainly declared to be due to Ahura Mazda; but along with this we find such words as the following:—

I do homage to you, Amesha Spenta, as singer of praises, as Zaota, as speaker of praises, as praiser, as speaker, as glorifier: for the praise, adoration, appeasing, and praise of you, Amesha Spentas: for our preparation, for the right fulfilling of prayer; for hallowing, for victory, for the well-being of the souls of those who are pure and will profit. To you Amesha Spentas, ye good rulers, ye wise, give I the soul from my body, and all enjoyment. ‡

Prayer for the offering, praise and adoration, namely of Ahura Mazda, of the Amesha Spentas, of the great lord of purity. For the offering, praise, satisfaction, and adoration of the highest lord of Ashi swift to help, of the prayer at the right time, swift to help, of Manthra Spenta, of the Mazdayasnian law, of the praiseworthy psalms; to all lords, all prayers at the right time, to all

* Luke IV. 8.

† 1 Tim. I. 17.

‡ Vispered VI.

the pure world for offering praise, appeasement, and adoration. *

We lay hold on (begin) praise and adoration of the good waters, the trees bearing fruit of themselves, the Fravashis of the pure. We lay hold on praise and adoration of those who are good, water, trees, and Fravashis of the pure. We begin praise and adoration of the bull, of Gaya-meretan, of Manthra Spenta, the pure, efficacious. We begin thy praise, thy adoration, O Ahura Mazda. We begin thy praise, thy adoration, O Zarathushtra. We begin thy offering, thy praise, O great Lord. We begin your offering, your praise, O Amesha Spentas. †

Many such passages there are in the Vispered and Yasnas. Some of the Yashts are quite in the same tone. Here is a sample :—

Ahura Mazda, the shining, majestic, praise we. The Amesha Spentas, the good, wise kings, praise we. The Amesha Spenta Vohu-mano praise we. Peace the victoriously smiting, praise we, which is set above other creatures. Asha Vahista, the fairest Amesha Spenta, praise we. The Airy-ama-ishya praise we. The strong, created by Mazda, praise we. Saoka the good, gifted with far seeing eyes, created by Mazda, pure, praise we. Khshathra-vairya, the Amesha Spenta, praise

* Vispered XVIII.

† Vispered XXIV.

we. Metal praise we. Charity which feeds the poor praise we. ¶

In the Tistar Yasht we have what is very like a direct repudiation of monotheism :—

I have created, O holy Zarathushtra, this star Tistrya as praiseworthy, as worthy of adoration, as worthy to be satisfied, as well created, as I myself, Ahura Mazda.

And similarly this in the Mihr-Yasht :—

Ahura Mazda spake to the Holy Zarathushtra ; When I created Mithra who possesses wide pastures I created him as worthy of honour, as praiseworthy, as I myself, Ahura Mazda.

It may seem unfair to refrain here from quoting John V, 23 ; “That all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father.” But this is wholly different from the equality of Ahura Mazda with Tistrya or Mithra ; for Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh ; he is himself the Creator ; whereas Tistrya and Mithra are but creatures.

In the Farvardin Yasht, among many other objects of adoration, Zarathushtra finds a place ;—

Zarathushtra, the Lord and Master of the whole corporeal world, praise we ; the most learned of beings, the mightiest of beings, the most shining of beings, the most to be satisfied among beings, the most to be praised among beings.

And in the Bahram Yasht the Cow is put forward for a share in the adoration:—

To the Cow belongs strength, to the Cow adoration, to the Cow speech, to the Cow victory,—

It would take a long time to read you all the passages of a similar character; the beings who are invoked and adored are simply countless. I will add one more quotation. In the Afrigan Rapithwin the worshipper is taught to say;—

Offering, praise, strength, and might, vow I for the praise, adoration, satisfaction, and laud, of Ahura Mazda, the shining, majestic, of the Amesha Spentas, of Asha Vahista, and the Fire, the son of Ahura Mazda, of all pure Yazatas, heavenly and earthly, the Fravashis of the pure, the bold, warring, the Fravashis of those devoted to the first law, the Fravashis of the nearest relations.*

(3) A third thought, inseparably connected with our ideas of God, is that he is the Creator.

In the Bible, creation is wholly and exclusively attributed to God as his work. Thus we read;—

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. *

By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. †
Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands. ‡

* Gen. I, 1. † Ps. XXXIII, 6. ‡ Ps. CII, 25.

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding. Who laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Where-upon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling band for it, and brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors; and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further, and here shall thy proud waves be staid? §

Thus saith the LORD that created the heavens, God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited; I am the LORD, and there is none else. †

There is no abatement from this claim anywhere in the Bible; creation is often spoken of, and always in the same strain,

But in the Avesta creation is by no means exclusively attributed to Ahura Mazda. He is certainly many times called Creator, but frequently other powers are assigned as co-workers with him. Thus:—

When both these Heavenly Beings came together

§ Job. XXXVIII, 4-11. † Is. XLV, 18.

in order to create at first life and perishability, and as the world should be at last. §

Now will I say to you, now give ear unto me, now hear, ye who are near, ye who are afar, that which is desired: it is now manifest, the wise (*i. e.* the Amesha Spentas) have created all. †

And in the Vendidad, as I showed you more fully in Lecture III, Angra Mainyus is declared to be the Creator of winter and sundry other things. Thus the Avesta throws doubt and indistinctness upon the attributes of God, making him share his Creatorship, and his claim to worship, with other beings, and giving him no absolute self-existence. I might go on to show a similar contrast between the two books in respect of God's Governorship, his Justice, his Holiness, and other attributes; but the one which seems to be most fully dwelt upon in the Avesta is his Wisdom: let me ask your attention to this.

Several of the names of Ahura Mazda are connected with wisdom or knowledge; *e. g.* the To be questioned, the Understanding, the Wisdom, the All observing, the Much seeing, the Undeceived, &c. And in many passages, especially in the Vendidad, Zoroaster comes forward asking questions which Ahura Mazda answers. We have in fact a Catechism, or instruction by question and answer, with this peculiarity, that wisdom to know what points need to be explained rests with the

one to be instructed; it is Zoroaster that puts the questions. The teaching in the books of Moses is to some extent parallel with that contained in the Vendidad, but it is not given in the catechetical form; Moses is not the one who suggests the points for instruction; the constantly repeated formula with which each fresh matter is introduced is—The LORD spake unto Moses saying. Moses simply received and recorded the instruction.

In respect of ritual details and other legal enactments, the Avesta and the Bible are on a par to this extent, that in each God is represented as the revealer: but if we ask what is the purport or aim of all the regulations? the books are no longer on a par; the one shows the purport clearly, and the other does not. Why should it be required to lay down a dead body on the ground "clothed with the light, facing the sun"? Why should a man who has helped to carry a dead body be required to wash himself in a very unsavory liquid, and a woman after childbirth have to drink some of the same? Why should fire not be brought into a house where a death has taken place, until nine days afterwards? No answer is given to any such questions. Turn to the Bible, and ask similar questions about its ritual, and the answers, with more or less clearness, are before us. Why should the Israelites have been commanded to offer a lamb every morning and every evening? Why was there a seven branched lampstand in the holy place of the tabernacle? Why

were they to observe the fiftieth year as a jubilee? These and all such questions find their answer in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. All these details were typical of him or some aspect of his work; "In the volume of the book it is written of me" * And now that Jesus Christ has come, and his work is accomplished all these details are swept away: he has "abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances." †

The wisdom of God in revelation is shown in other ways besides making known legal and ritual details, and their anti-typical meanings; it is shown in revealing the origin of the world, the things that took place before man was created; it is shown in declaring things still future, prophesying what will happen on this world in years to come, and in the heavenly world when this one has passed away. I have already spoken to you about the origin of the world; the subject of prophecy I must leave for another lecture later on.

I will mention one more attribute of God,—his Love.

The word Love is a rare one in the Avesta. There is no mention of it in the long list of the names of Ahura in the Ormazd Yasht; it is not ascribed to him in the Vendidad or in the Yasnas, but in the Qarset Nyayis we find this passage, in which Love is introduced; it certainly is an exception; I think I may say it is a surprise:—

* Ps. XL. 7. † Eph II, 15.

I praise and exalt thee, the Creator Ormazd, the Brilliant Majestic, Omniscient, the Perfecter of deeds, the Lord of Lords, the Prince over all princes, the Protector, the Creator of the created, the Giver of daily food, the Powerful, Good, Strong, Old, Forgiving, Granter of forgiveness, Rich in Love, Mighty and Wise, the pure Supporter.

Shall we ask who are the objects of Ahura Mazda's Love, and what has he done to show it? I do not think these questions are answered in the Avesta: Ahura Mazda is represented more as insisting upon true Mazdayasnianism, and threatening punishment upon non-conformists. Expressions of praise and admiration abound, but anything like grateful love is conspicuous by its absence. Turn to the Bible and what do we find? One of the earliest types in the Bible represents God as a Father, and mankind as his son, his only son. The son was under sentence of death, and a substitute was found for him. The meaning of this I hope to show you in a later Lecture, but I mention it now because of the expression "thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest."* In the giving of the law God declared himself a Jealous God.† Jealousy implies love. If our property is interfered with, or our reputation is maligned, we may be vexed, but we are Jealous only if our Love is disappointed. Further on in the same book another type represents God as bearing the names of his people on his heart:—

* Gen. XXII, 2. † Ex. XX, 5.

Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of Judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the LORD continually. ‡

More clearly Moses declared the love of God for his people in these words:—

The LORD did not set his love upon you nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people; but because the LORD loved you. ¶

And as the sure consequence of loving is a longing for love in return, so Moses taught:—

Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. §

More frequent mention is made of the love and goodness of God in the Poetical books, and in the Prophets. Here are some of the texts:—

How excellent is thy loving kindness O God! §

Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee. ‡

I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee. *

The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing. †

‡ Ex. XXVIII, 29. ¶ Deu. VII. 7, 8. § Deu. VI, 5.

§ Ps. XXXVI, 7. ‡ Is. XLIII. 4. * Jer. XXXI. 3.

† Zeph. III, 17.

But it is when we come to the New Testament, that the love of God stands out in all its fulness, and we are taught how it includes the whole world in its embrace. Thus:—

God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. ‡

As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love. §

God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ¶

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. ||

Many other texts might be cited, but these will suffice to show that when the Bible says God is Love, it is no isolated, disconnected statement, it is a revelation that pervades the whole book; and it opens out to us a vision of life for this world and the next, that is unknown to the legalist or the philosopher; a vision of life that only God could reveal, and that is revealed to us only in the Bible.

‡ John III, 16. § John XV. 9. ¶ Rom. V, 8.

|| 1 John IV, 8, 9.

LECTURE V

THE DUALITY

OF THE

AVESTA AND THE BIBLE

This subject is in continuation of my last Lecture, for our idea of the Person of God is very much dependant upon our thought of his being one alone, without a peer or rival. If there are two gods, and we choose one of them to follow and worship, that one is not Almighty ; at least we have no assurance that he is so ; he may be restrained by the other. If in any degree, or with respect to any action he has a rival, then in that degree, or with respect to that action, we cannot give him our whole trust and confidence, we cannot conceive of him as absolute, as ruling according to his will. Both the Avesta and the Bible tell us that God is a great king, ruling according to his will ; but they both also tell us of an evil spirit, who opposes, and to some extent mars the work of God. Do they both tell us the same thing about this evil one ?

The subject of Duality is also in continuation of the Lecture I gave you about the Cosmogony ; for the

Avesta puts forward this evil principle prominently in connection with creation ; the Bible does not ; and herein lies one difference between the two teachings.

Before comparing the two more fully, I will read you a quotation from Dr. Haug's Essays on the Parsees. The passage is in itself of no great moment, but as Mr. Karaka quotes it with approval in his History of the Parsees, I am disposed to think there may be other Parsees, perhaps some of you now present, who concur with it ; and in that case it will be well to try and clear up a confusion of thought that it displays on this subject of Duality.

The quotation is as follows :—

The opinion so generally entertained now that Zarathushtra was preaching a dualism, that is to say, the idea of two original independent spirits, one good and the other bad, is owing to a confusion of his philosophy with his theology. Having arrived at the grand idea of the unity and indivisibility of the Supreme Being, he undertook to solve the great problem which has engaged the attention of so many wise men of antiquity and even of modern times, *viz.*—how are the imperfections discoverable in the world, the various kinds of evils, wickedness, and baseness, compatible with the goodness, holiness, and justness of God. This great thinker of remote antiquity solved this difficult question philosophically by the supposition of two primeval causes which, though different,

were united, and produced the world of material things as well as that of the spirit.

The one who produced the "reality" is called Vohumano, "the good mind ;" the other through whom the "non-reality" originated bears the name Akemmano, "the evil mind." All good, true, and perfect things, which fall under the category of "reality" are the production of the "good mind ;" while all that is bad and delusive belongs to the sphere of "non-reality," and is traced to the "evil mind." They are the two moving causes in the universe, united from the beginning, and therefore called Twins. They are present everywhere, in the Ahura Mazda as well as in men.

These two primeval principles, if supposed to be united in Ahura Mazda himself, are not called Vohumano and Akemmano, but Spento Mainyush, the "beneficent spirit," and Anglo Mainyush, the "hurtful spirit." That Anglo Mainyush is no separate being opposed to Ahura Mazda is to be gathered unmistakeably from Yas. XIX. 9. where Ahura Mazda is mentioning his two spirits who are inherent in his own nature, and are in other passages distinctly called the "two creators," and the "two masters." And, indeed, we never find Anglo Mainyush mentioned as a constant opponent of Ahura Mazda in the Gathas. The evil against which Ahura Mazda and all good men are fighting is called "drukhsh," a personification of destruction or lie. The same expression for the evil

spread in the world we find in the Persian Cuneiform inscriptions, where, moreover, no opponent of Ahura Mazda like *Angro Mainyush* is ever mentioned. God (Ahura Mazda) in the rock-records of king Darius is only one, as Jehovah is in the Old Testament, having no adversary whatever.

Spento Mainyush was regarded as the author of all that is bright and shining, of all that is good and useful in nature ; while *Angro Mainyush* called into existence all that is dark and apparently noxious. Both are as inseparable as day and night, and though opposed to each other are indispensable for the preservation of creation. The beneficent spirit appears in the blazing flame, the presence of the hurtful one is marked by the wood converted into charcoal. *Spento Mainyush* has created the light of day, and *Angro Mainyush* the darkness of night ; the former awakens men to their duties, the latter lulls them to sleep. Life is produced by *Spento Mainyush*, but extinguished by *Angro Mainyush*, whose hands by releasing the soul from the fetters of the body enable him to rise into immortality and everlasting life.

Now observe, that there is a Duality of creating power or principle, is here said to be Philosophy, not Theology. But Philosophy, if it is concerned with the person of God, is Theology : so whatever haziness of thought that attempt at distinction may have induced in your minds

with reference to the relation in which the evil one stands to the Creator, had better be simply thrown aside. It is Theology; at least (not to contend for a word,) it touches our conception of God. You can of course call it by some other term, if you prefer to do so, but that will not alter the fact that to believe in two original principles, is to give up faith in one only Almighty and Eternal God. Then again we are told that to believe in two primeval principles is not Dualism. Then what is it? it is just exactly what Dualism means; and to choose some other term for it in place of Dualism is playing with words. But it is more than playing with words, it is little short of downright perversion of fact, when we are told that the relation of *Angro Mainyush* to *Ahura Mazda* is not one of constant opposition. I have given you already quotations from the *Yasna* and *Vendidad* which show how intense that opposition is represented to be; here is one more to the same effect from the *Gatha Ustvaiti* :—

“ Now will I announce : the two Heavenly ones at the beginning of the world,—of these two thus spoke the Holy to the Evil; Not do our souls, not our doctrines, not our understanding, not our wishes, not our sayings, not our works, not the laws, not the souls, unite themselves.”

But now without further discussion of what Dualism may exactly mean, I invite you to consider this question,—How did evil come into existence in the world?

Perhaps, indeed, to avoid confusion, another question should be asked first,—what is evil? If such

things as charcoal, night, winter, sleep, are to be called evil, then asking about their origin is going back upon the subject of cosmogony : I call all these things good ; and to distinguish between the creators of night and day, summer and winter, and so on, to call one a good creator and the other a bad one, is misplaced trifling, and not worth detaining you about for one serious moment. Look for yourselves and see how such Duality appears in the Avesta : certainly you will find no approach to it in the Bible.

But take the question I have put before you in all seriousness ; how did sin and sorrow, pain and death, come to be in the world ? or, if all other evils result from sin, how did sin come to be ?

It is conceivable, as an abstract proposition, that such evils may have been intruded into a good creation by an evil agency, independent of the Creator, and hostile to him. This involves the further supposition that the evil one is not a creature, but is himself God ; at least so far as the attribute of self-existence is concerned. This theory might be consistent with the actual state of things in the kosmos around us ; it would involve no glaring contradiction to natural science which declared that the world is all formed on one consistent design, but it would land us in the belief of gross and unmitigated Dualism. Another proposition, which is in the abstract conceivable, is that there is one and only one self-existent Being, one and only one Creator, but that he was unequal to the task of making a world perfectly good ; he was deficient : the deficiency may

have been in power, he tried to make the world perfectly good and failed : or the deficiency may have been in goodness ; he had no desire to give his creatures unmixed blessing, he wished them to suffer : or the deficiency may have been in wisdom ; he wished his creatures to enjoy pure happiness, and was able to confer it upon them, but failed to perceive how this was to be accomplished, and so creation has come short of being perfect.

Now let us turn to the two books we are studying, and see what they teach about this matter.

The following are the passages, at least the leading passages in the Avesta which speak of this Duality:—

Both these Heavenly Beings, the Twins gave first of themselves to understand both the good and the evil, in thoughts, words, and works; rightly do the wise distinguish between them, not so the imprudent. When both these Heavenly Beings came together, in order to create at first life and perishability, and as the world should be at last: the evil for the bad, the Best Spirit for the Pure. Of these two Heavenly Beings the bad chose the evil, acting thereafter, the Holiest Spirit, which prepared the very firm heaven, chose the pure, and those who make Ahura Mazda contented with manifest actions, believing in Mazda. *

Professor Spiegel's note on ver. 3, in this passage is as follows:—

* Yasna XXX, 3-5.

This verse and the following contain a brief but important account of the creation of the world. In naming Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu Twins, this description agrees with that contained in the Armenian writers, Eshik for example, where they are both considered as "the Sons of time". The "wise" and the "imprudent" are specially distinguished from each other, (as well as the "good" and the "bad",) because while Ahura Mazda works with perfect foresight of the result, Angra Mainyu always works without forethought, and only becomes aware of his mistakes when too late to rectify them.

N. B. Eshik's account of the birth of these twins is given in the Appendix.

Now will I announce: the two Heavenly Ones at the beginning of the world, of these two thus spake the Holy to the Evil; not do our souls, not our doctrines, not our understanding, not our wishes, not our sayings, not our works, not the laws, not the souls unite themselves. *

They are the most active of the creatures of both the Heavenlies, the good, strong, holy Fravashis of the pure, who at that time stood on high, when the two Heavenly Ones created the creatures: the Holy spirit and the Evil. When Angra Mainyu entered into the creation of the good purity, then entered between everywhere, Vohu-mano and the fire. They torment the tormentings of Angra

* Yasna XLIV, 2.

Mainyus, the wicked, that he may not stay the flowing of the water, the growth of trees. Ever flow forwards the waters of the strong Creator, the mighty Ahura Mazda, the most Profitable, the trees increase. *

Is it too much to say that the former of the two abstract propositions which I have put forward as conceivable is the one which we find taught in the Avesta? The evil spirit has an independent existence, he has interfered with the good creation of Ahura Mazda, and carries on war with it, he has created Daevas to assist him, and though too weak to overthrow the good Creator, he is strong enough to carry out his will to the extent of doing much mischief, and giving much trouble, and gaining many adherents : he is strong enough even to put the good Creator to such straits that it becomes necessary for him to call in assistance so as to overcome in the struggle.

It is to be observed also that in such passages as the following, where the intention is evidently to express the idea of time before all creation, and where consequently an inclusive enumeration is given of all created things, Angra Mainyus is not mentioned among them ; he was before them all, being co-eval with Ahura Mazda himself.

Zarathushtra asked Ahura Mazda : Ahura Mazda, Heavenly, Holiest, Creator of the corporeal world, Pure ; which was the speech that thou hast spoken

* Farvardin Yasht.

to me, as being before the heaven, before the water, before the earth, before the bull, before the trees, before the fire the son of Ahura Mazda, before the pure men, before the Daevas with perverted soul, before mankind, before the whole corporeal world, before all the good things created by Mazda which have a pure origin?*

What then says the Bible as to the origin of evil, and the existence of the dual principle? In the first place it absolutely negatives the above proposition that evil was introduced into creation by a power independent of the Creator, and hostile to him. Thus in the first verse of the Bible the story of creation is commenced with this words, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." And the same Creator is recognised as the sole worker at every stage on to the completion of the work. In my last Lecture I gave you some other passages to the same effect; I will now give you one more. The teaching of the Bible is that Almighty God created all things by his Son, and the enumeration of things created is given in these words;—

"By him (by the Son of God,) were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things and by him all things consist. †

There is no room left here for duality of creating powers.

* Yasna. XIX.

† Col. I, 16-17.

Just as clearly the other supposition I have made as to the origin of evil is negatived. God is not deficient in power.

Is there anything too hard for the LORD. *

I will work, and who shall let it? †

He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say unto him, what doest thou? ‡

According to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand, in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet. ¶

And God is not deficient in goodness.

The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. §

Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee? ||

Praise the LORD, for the LORD is good. **

Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. ††

* Gen. XVIII, 14. † Is. XLIII, 13. ‡ Dan. IV, 35. ¶ Eph. I, 19-22. § Ex. XXXIV, 6. || Ps. XXXI, 19. ** Ps. CXXXV, 3. †† 1 Cor. II, 9.

And God is not deficient in wisdom.

The LORD possessed me (wisdom) in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. When he prepared the heavens, I was there ; when he set a compass upon the face of the depth ; when he established the clouds above, when he strengthened the fountains of the deep ; when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment ; when he appointed the foundations of the earth.*

The everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary ; there is no searching of his understanding.†

The acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.‡

The teaching of the Bible on these points is thus summarised in the first Article of the Church of England ;—

There is but one living and true God, everlasting, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness ; the Maker and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible.

This witness is true.

But if so, what answer can we give to the question before us ? How did evil come to be ? I made two suppositions at the beginning of this Lecture, *viz.* that evil came from a second yet independent God, or that it

* Prov. VIII. 22, 27, 28, 29. † Is. XL. 28. ‡ Col. II. 2, 3.

resulted from creation having been undertaken by an incompetent God. These two are not the only conceivable alternatives ; there is a third *viz.* that what we regard as evil is only such in appearance ; it is evil only because we look at it with foreshortened gaze ; the Creator, wholly good himself, has included growth, improvement, developement, in his scheme of creation ; what we see is not the final stage, but only an intermediate one ; pain, sorrow, death, even sin, are phases of being through which sentient and rational creatures are to pass in order to reach their destined perfection. And if we ask, Why should not their final perfection have been conferred upon them at once, without their having to pass through such transition experiences ? Perhaps the answer is beyond us ; we need to scan God's plan with a wider vision, and fuller comprehension, than are ours at present, in order to judge of its adaptation to the end in view. And yet, indeed, we can see, to some extent, how these experiences are needed ; how they are better than their avoidance would have been : for perfect joy, given us without a struggle, as beauty is given to a diamond or scent to a rose, would have had no element of victory in it ; we might have had peace, but it would not have been, as we are now assured it will be, the peace of victory. There would have been none of the grateful exultation which the Apostle's song of triumph has expressed:—

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ?
Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or

famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

This explanation of the final cause of evil, is wholly free from any taint of duality in the original creation, though it recognises duality in subsequent working: there are not two Gods, but there are two powers now active, one good and the other evil, and the evil one is called "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."†

In proceeding to show you that this is the teaching of the Bible, I must distinguish between the origin of sin and its introduction into this world of ours. The former is left in obscurity, the latter is clearly recounted. Look at the third chapter of Genesis, which contains the narrative of the first human sin; the beginning of it is as follows:—

Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, we may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye

* Rom. VIII. 35-37.

† Eph. II, 2.

shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat there- of, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.

Here we learn that the devil in the form of a serpent tempted the woman through her longing for greater knowledge, and the attractiveness of the forbidden fruit, and drew the man also into sin through his love of his wife. Those feelings were in themselves sinless; but they should have been overborne by determination to obey God, who had forbidden that particular indulgence; the man and woman lacked strength of will, God had created them pure and holy, but not infinitely strong; and the evil one detected their weakness, and so beguiled them. This narrative is mentioned or alluded to many times in the later Scriptures, and from them we learn how to regard it. Thus we are taught that one end to be accomplished by this irruption of evil was manifestation of mercy. Thus S. Paul writes:—

God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. *

* Eph. II, 4, 5, 7.

And again he writes:—

For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. *

Another purpose was the cultivation of hope and patience. As the same Apostle writes:—

The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope.The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now; and not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. †

Also it was God's purpose that mankind should know what it is to struggle and conquer.

They joy before thee as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. ‡

In accordance with this Jesus Christ declared that the life to which he raises us is fuller and better, than the original life of peaceful innocence.

I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. ¶

* 1 Tim. I, 16. † Rom. VIII, 20, 22-25. ‡ Is. IX, 3. ¶ John X. 10.

Yet another purpose was instruction on a wider scale than humanity. The work of God, as it developes in this world, is known and read in other worlds ; heavenly intelligences are learning lessons beyond all they knew before.

To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

One whole book of the Bible is given to show that this is so in respect of the sufferings of an innocent man. Job was an innocent man, and there fell upon him for no fault of his own, sorrow and loss and pain. And the question is raised, why did he suffer ? Three friends came to condole with him and they discussed this question, giving their own solution. Job in his answers utterly repudiated their solution, and discussed it from his own point of view. A fourth friend, not noticed at first, takes it up when the other three desist from arguing, and he offers a fresh solution. Finally God interposes, and rebukes the three friends as having spoken amiss ; his words open out a wider view than any of the previous speakers had suggested. The successive answers given to the question are these:—The three friends bluntly declared that Job's sufferings were for punishment, if he had not sinned openly he must have sinned secretly, and he deserved all that had come upon him and more. Thus one of them says:—

* Eph. III. 10, 11.

Is not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities infinite? For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing. Therefore snares are round about thee, and sudden fear troubleth thee.*

Job's own protestation is that he has committed no sin to bring such punishment upon him; he cannot say what the reason of his trouble is; but it is not evil desert.

I will say unto God, do not condemn me; show me wherefore thou contendest with me. Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress, that thou shouldest despise the work of thine hands, and shine upon the counsel of the wicked? Thou knowest that I am not wicked; and there is none that can deliver out of thine hand. Thou huntest me as a fierce lion; and again thou showest thyself marvellous upon me.†

The fourth friend looks forward beyond the trouble itself; he looks to the sequel, and bids Job accept his bitter experience, not as affliction, but as training for a happier future in a way he cannot at present understand.

Behold God exalteth by his power; who teacheth like him? Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgement, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict.‡

* Job XXII. 5, 6, 10. † Chap. X. 2, 3, 7, 16. ‡ Chap. XXXVI, 22, and XXXVII, 23.

Lastly when God himself speaks, attention is drawn to other creatures which are his concern and care; and the selfishness that would make Job seek an explanation of his trouble in his own life exclusively, is put away for a larger outlook; God is using that trouble for the advance of his own purpose in the instruction of beings of whom Job knows nothing.

Wilt thou also disannul my judgement? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous? Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him? Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty. Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath; and behold everyone that is proud, and abase him. Look on every one that is proud, and bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place. Hide them in the dust together; and bind their faces in secret. Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee.*

The four answers to the question why is Job in trouble? may be briefly expressed thus:—

His suffering is punitive;

It is mysterious;

It is disciplinary;

It is didactic.

The first of these four is declared to be wrong and the second deficient, the third is allowed to stand un-reproved, but the fourth is the larger truth.

* Chap. XL, 8-14.

It remains to show you the two or three passages in the Bible that refer to the actual origin of evil, and not merely its introduction into this world of ours.

Jesus said to his disciples on one occasion, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." From this we learn that the first appearance of sin in heaven, and its penal consequences, were fully known to Jesus, though he declined to give us a full statement on the subject.

Again he said, when he touched upon the same subject in one of his parables ;—

An enemy hath done this.

The question which he answered in these words was in effect,—How came sin into the world? and, as in the preceding passage, he simply declined to go back to the first birth of sin, and tell us how it came to pass.

There is also a hint, I can call it no more, to the effect that the first sin was pride, or arose from pride; for S. Paul, in directing that a novice should not be appointed Bishop, adds these words:—

Lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.†

And a similar thought perhaps underlies the rebuke addressed to the king of Babylon by the prophet Isaiah:—

Thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of

* Matt. XIII, 28.

† 1 Tim. III, 6.

God ; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north ; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds ; I will be like the most High.*

On the whole, comparing what is said in the two books on this abstruse subject, this much seems clear:—

1. The real ultimate origin of evil is fully explained neither in the one book nor in the other.
2. The dualism that exalts the evil principle into co-parity of existence with the holy Creator, is found in the Avesta, not in the Bible.
3. The thought of evil being a means in the hand of the Almighty for accomplishing great good, is given in the Bible, not in the Avesta.

* Is. XIV. 13, 14.

LECTURE VI.

THE ETHICS

OF THE

AVESTA AND THE BIBLE.

In examining the Ethics of a religion, regard must be had both to the code itself, and to the inducement

held out to follow it and live in accordance with it. A ship at sea may have a good rudder, but if it has no propeller it will be at the mercy of the winds and waves; and if it is well supplied with power, but has nothing to control its course, it will be not much better off. And the code may be given either in the form of direct command, or of a proverbial maxim, or of a pattern prayer, or of a living example: the variety of the form makes no difference to the substance of the teaching. In one passage of the Bible we read,—Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not: and in another,—He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: and in another,—Teach me O LORD, the way of thy statutes: and in another we have the example of Jesus Christ, who took the first opportunity his parents allowed him of attending the Bible class held by the doctors in Jerusalem. All these have the same ethical meaning for us. We may look at one portion of the Avesta equally with another to ascertain its teaching; at the Vendidad equally with the Khordah Avesta; the Yasnas equally with the Gahs. Perhaps the most pronounced maxim in the whole book is—Good thoughts, good words, good works. This is a formula of frequent occurrence; and it shows that a mere external show of goodness is not deemed sufficient; purity must pervade the whole inner being. So far the Avesta and the Bible are at one; for the same demand is frequent in the Bible also, though not expressed in exactly the same formula. These texts may suffice to show that the God of the Bible looks to the heart, and not merely to the outer life.

I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.*

O LORD, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, Thou understandest my thought afar off. Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts.†

All the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts.‡

But what is "goodness"? It is vain to say we must be "good", unless we are taught the difference between good and evil. Shall we say that it is a matter for every man to decide according to his own conscience? Such seems to be Mr. Karaka's opinion when he says, "The best court of equity is a clear conscience."¶ If this is simply Mr. Karaka's own dictum, I need not discuss it; but if it is an opinion current among the Parsis, let me point out that it would leave every man free to do as he thinks right; and no one of us could have any ground for objecting on ground of morality to what any one else may determine to do. A Parsee may not condemn a Mohammedan for extinguishing the sacred fire, because he would say he does it with a clear conscience; nor may he condemn a Hindu for burning his widowed mother to death, for he likewise would say it is not murder, it is a holy deed done with a clear conscience. The fact is, conscience needs to

* Jer. XVII, 10. † Ps. CXXXIX, 1, 2, 23. ‡ Rev. II, 23.

¶ History of the Parsis; Vol. II, P. 104.

be enlightened, and if we shut our hearts against the enlightenment which God has given us in his word, we do so at our peril. No; the only true court of equity is in the presence of the holy God; and conscience is but the herald of the court, declaring the will of God for our guidance, and for our rebuke if we refuse that guidance. But the herald needs to learn his proclamation from the word of God, or both guidance and rebuke will be wrongly given. And this is abundantly borne out by the teaching of the Avesta no less than of the Bible.

What then is the Ethical code taught in these books?

Taking the Avesta first, and beginning with the Vendidad, which contains its judicial section, we find the following rules laid down amongst others: each wrongful deed has its penalty attached, so that we can perceive not only what things are accounted sinful, but also what degree of sinfulness is imputed to each.

The sin that is treated as of least moment is assault. Various kinds of assault are distinguished; and repetition of an offence is treated as an aggravation, so that a slighter assault committed repeatedly becomes equivalent to a more serious kind committed for the first time. The most serious offence of the nature of assault is of course, murder; and this takes its place in the list. The various penalties range from 5 strokes to 200, a single case of murder being punished with only 90. Another sin that reaches to the same maximum of 200 is giving bad food to a dog. The degree of guiltiness varies according to the kind of dog that is ill treated;

if a young dog is badly fed, the number of stripes is 50 ; other dogs are accounted more valuable, and a shepherd's dog heads the list. Several other offences are adjudged equivalent to aggravated assault, or giving bad food to a shepherd's dog, and are assigned 200 stripes ; such as bringing fire into a house too soon after a death has occurred in it, sowing on ground without first searching for bones and hair on it, teaching a wrong creed, a woman drinking water to save her life within three days after her confinement. Then there are other sins that reach up to a maximum of 1000 stripes, and so appear to be reckoned five times as heinous as any of the above ; thus breaking a contract is to be punished with stripes varying in number from 300 to 1000. Covering a corpse with clothes is a sin varying in intensity according to the amount of the body covered ; the penalty ranges from 400 to 1000. Throwing a bone on the ground is another sin with the same maximum penalty ; if the bone is only the top joint of the little finger, the punishment is 50 stripes ; as the quantity increases, so the number of stripes increases, until we come to the full penalty of 1000 stripes for throwing a whole corpse on the ground. So that you may kill a man and incur only 90 stripes, but if you throw his dead body on the ground you incur 1000. Conscience certainly needs enlightenment here, for whose conscience, left to the light of nature, would have arrived at such an estimate as this ? Killing a dog is more serious than any of the above ; the punishment varies from 500 strokes in the case of a young

dog, to 10000 for a water dog. The death penalty is assigned to burning a corpse ; also to dropping hairs or parings of finger nails on the ground ; also to performing a ceremonial sprinkling without having properly learnt the Mazdayasnian law. This is far from an exhaustive list, but it may suffice to show that though good thoughts, as well as words and works, are repeatedly called for, yet the sins of thought are very much in the background ; it is the sins of deed, and especially deeds that are concerned with rites and ceremonies, that are considered of importance. To classify these sins according to the severity with which they are treated, we may range them thus :—

- Sins of thought and feeling are lightly esteemed ;
- Sins against the person are next in importance ;
- Then come sins in respect of property ;
- * Worse than these are sins against the dog ;
- And worst of all sins of irregular ritual.

Sins of malice and envy, and other impurities of the heart are mentioned more fully in the Patets ; they are made the subject of confession indiscriminately with the Vendidad sins, and are not classified by any indication of relative heinousness. There is one Patet which mentions sins that “burden the conscience” in a strangely exclusive way : it is the Patet Aderbat ; one paragraph mentions sin against father, mother, and other relations ; another mentions sins that belong to the category of “dirt and corpses ;” another names pride, haughtiness, and many other sins ; there are in all 16 or 17 such paragraphs, and of these one begins with the words:—

“These sins which burden the conscience.” Are we to understand that the conscience is left unburdened by all those other sins? If so it is hopeless to attempt any co-ordination of the Zoroastrian conscience with the conscience that is guided by the Bible. Let me refer again to Mr. Karaka; for though the sentence I have already quoted from him about conscience is not very helpful, yet doubtless he has in a general way correctly grasped the ethical sentiment of the Parsees, and he identifies this sentiment with the teaching of the Avesta; at least so I understand from this passage in his book.—

A perusal of these works (the Parsi Scriptures) will show that they inculcate those sublime doctrines and sound precepts of morality which command the respect of every civilised nation on earth. Evil actions are placed in their proper light and condemned, whereas the practice of every virtue is enjoined, highly extolled, and sanctioned by reward in this as well as the next world. The Zend-Avesta insists in emphatic terms that virtue alone is happiness in this world, and that its path is the path of peace.

I have not found any such statements in the Avesta; but let that pass: we may suppose that the code of morals as he gives it is intended to reflect fairly the whole teaching of those Scriptures. Here is his list of sins;—

Murder, infanticide, poisoning, adultery on the part of men as well as on that of women, sorcery, sodomy, cheating in weight and measure, breach

of promise whether made to a Zoroastrian or non-Zoroastrian, telling lies and deceiving, false covenants, slander and calumny, perjury, dishonest appropriation of wealth, taking bribes, keeping back the wages of labourers, misappropriation of religious property, removal of a boundary stone, turning people out of their property, maladministration and defrauding, apostasy and heresy, and rebellion. Abandoning the husband; not acknowledging one's children, on the part of a father; cruelty towards subjects, on the part of a ruler; avarice, laziness, illiberality and egotism, envy.

He adds a further list of 22 sins which he says are "punishable in hell from a merely Zoroastrian point of view"; whereas the above are regarded as sins by Christians as well as by Zoroastrians.

Not heeding the laws regarding menstruation, on the part of women, by touching water or fire. Pollution of water and fire by washing in standing or running water, or throwing impure matter into it as well as into fire.

Intentional extinction of fire in general, and that of the most sacred fire in particular.

Use of public warm baths, frequented and contaminated by many.

Unlawful and unnecessary slaughter of cattle and sheep.

Ill treatment of the animals of the good creation, such as cattle, sheep, dogs, water-otter, by starving, beating, or killing them.

Carrying the dead body alone (lest in so carrying it alone the person is overtaken by a danger, to withstand which he is helpless).

Destruction of a bridge over a rapid river.

Intercourse with a menstruous woman.

Eating when talking and ~~not~~ saying grace.

Eating the grain which is destined to be sown.

Devouring dead refuse.

Disregard of the poor and good, principally of travellers, by not giving them what they ask for, or by charging for what is given them.

Distressing parents, and obstinacy.

Lamentation and weeping.

Disobedience of a wife to her husband.

Beautifying of faces, and wearing the hair of others.

A mother nursing other children, leaving her own without milk.

Violation of a next-of-kin marriage on the part of women. .

Walking without shoes.

Unbelief in the religion of Ahura Mazda.

Idol worship.

I will not stop to criticise the false estimate of Christian morality which Mr. Karaka here presents to his readers, but will take his lists as correct so far as Parseeism is concerned. If they are so, then the Avesta is discredited, for practices which it condemns are here unnoticed, and others are here branded as sins about which it says nothing. But when Mr. Karaka says that the principles of morality which he advocates "com-

mand the respect of every civilised nation on earth," it is not easy honestly to put any meaning into his words. The rules about burning corpses and worshipping idols certainly do not command the respect of Hindus ; are they not civilised ? Among the Mohammedans it is no unpardonable sin to carry a dead body alone ; are they not civilised ? Christians have no objection on grounds of morality to walk without shoes ; are they not civilised ? The fact is that Parsee morality is a thing entirely by itself ; no other nation, civilised or uncivilised, has a code that bears the smallest resemblance to some of its most distinctive features.

In the Bible there are lists of sins, but they are all declared to be growths from one and the same root ; and it is the root that determines the character of the fruit. Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point he is guilty of all." (James II, 10.) This shows that while one sin may be greater than another, even the smallest sin wilfully committed is an evidence of the evil root within the heart, and it is the heart, not simply, and not chiefly, the action, that stands within the purview of God's law. Love to God is the first commandment, and want of love to Him is the root from which every other sin springs forth. One of the lists of sins was given in very solemn form, when God had gathered his people round Mount Sinai in the Arabian desert, and uttered the words himself from the midst of thick darkness on the top of the mount, so that they heard his voice. The sins enumerated, so far as concerns the ethical code, are

these,—dishonoring parents, murder, adultery, stealing, false witness, coveting : but these are generic, not special, as we are taught elsewhere in the Bible, and include,—all disobedience to those in authority over us, all unkindness, even to the utterance of an angry or contemptuous word, or the neglect of effort to reconcile an offended brother ; all impurity, though it be but a lustful thought or look ; all dealings with our neighbor's property different from what we should wish him to accord us if our positions were interchanged ; all statements to our neighbor's detriment that are not strictly in accordance with truth and charity ; all desire to gain anything for ourselves at our neighbor's expense. The list itself is given in Ex. XX, 12-17 ; and the exposition is mainly in Matt. V, 21-32, and VII, 12. Another list, including sins of thought, word, and deed, is in these words ;—

These six things doth the LORD hate ; yea seven are an abomination unto him ; A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.*

Another list is given as characteristic of those who have refused the knowledge of God ;—

Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate

* Prov. VI, 17-19.

mind, to do those things which are not convenient ; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness ; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity ; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.*

There is yet another list, addressed to the Galatian Christians, and differing from the preceding chiefly by omission of those sins to which the Galatians were not naturally addicted ; they were generous, not covetous ; and though they could be violent in their resentment, at the same time they were an affectionate, warm-hearted race. The passage runs thus :—

The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these ; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditious, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like ; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.†

All these sins, and whatever others may be named elsewhere, are traced to want of love ; and it is broadly declared that to love is to fulfil the whole law.

Owe no man anything but to love one another ; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

* Rom. I, 28-31.

† Gal. V, 19-21.

For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.*

In comparing these lists with those of the Avesta, we find no doubt much similarity in some of the details; but the dog which occupies so exalted a position there, is here unrecognised as superior to other animals; and the sins of irregular ritual, which there take precedence of all others, are here wholly unnoticed.

But the ethics of the Bible are not given so much in a formal code as in maxims and examples. The book of Proverbs has many such maxims; one main object of the book is to teach them to us. Here are some of them:—

He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker; but he that honoreth him hath mercy on the poor.†

How much better is it to get wisdom than gold, and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver.‡

Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honor is humility.¶

* Rom. XIII, 8-10.

† Chap. XIV, 31.

‡ Chap. XVI, 16.

¶ Chap. XVIII, 12.

Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright; at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.*

If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat, and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink; for thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head and the LORD shall reward thee.†

Also the Bible contains a large number of historical examples, and parables which are quasi-historical, with ethical teaching. Here for instance is a parable, spoken by Jesus Christ to a lawyer, to teach the true meaning of neighborliness:—

A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence,

* Chap. XXIII, 31, 32. † Chap. XXV, 21, 22.

and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him, and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.*

Let us pass on to the inducement, the motive power, which we find in each book to make its ethical code effectual.

In the Avesta there is the ordinary inducement held out of rewards and punishments: the punishments with which the book bristles would no doubt be powerfully operative to secure outward conformity to the rules laid down, if they were actually enforced: you do not need to be told that they are all an idle threat; the stripes are never inflicted; and if they were, they could not touch the heart and mould the feelings, they could but induce an outward show of obedience. The impotence of the Avesta to maintain its position as an operative code was openly acknowledged by Ardeshir Babekan when he attempted to revive the system: he is said to have invited more than forty thousand priests and learned men, from all parts of his empire, to devise means for rescuing the national faith from neglect; a committee was appointed, of which one Arda Viraf was the leading member, and they issued a book entitled "Revelations of Arda Viraf." This is what Mr. Karaka says about that book.—

* Luke X, 30-37.

The description which the Parsi sage gives of heaven and hell, the happy state in which the good and virtuous souls were located, and the torments and miseries which those who had walked in evil ways were condemned to suffer, are eminently calculated to stimulate virtuous conduct, and induce the bad to amend their ways and lead lives of piety and holiness. Arda Viraf speaks of a place that he beheld, which seemed to him to be composed of diamonds and rubies, the splendor of which surpassed that of the sun at noonday, and bore resemblance to flashes of vivid lightning; that it appeared like a spacious garden, planted with trees and shrubs of various kinds, and adorned with rivulets and springs; that the trees were alive with singing birds, filling the air with their melodious notes; that the spring sent out the scent of roses; that this was the residence of those who had worshipped none other than one God, and had walked in the way of holiness and devotion all their lives, performing the duties enjoined by the laws of God with zeal and activity; that the gems represented their virtues, while their souls were absorbed in splendors which could not be gazed upon: on the other hand, the place of the sinner, the evil disposed, and the wicked, is described in the darkest colors imaginable. When it is remembered that this picturesque style of writing appeals forcibly to an Eastern mind, it cannot be doubted that it held forth the most

powerful inducements to the practice of virtue and the shunning of evil.

Mr. Karaka then knows of no incentive to holiness of life stronger than the prospect of rewards and punishments after death. Judge for yourselves if this is sufficient : when a breeze of passion stirs your soul, or when lust asserts itself within you, does the thought of the Chinvat Bridge act as an effectual restraint, so that lust is curbed and passion dies away ? Or does the restraint yield and vanish, like tow when the fire has touched it ?

The Bible also tells us of rewards and punishments, and if this was all, the only way to decide between the books, and determine which of them is the most effectual, would be to compare the degree of faith which each inspires in its adherents. This would be a difficult comparison to institute. It is however not at all necessary, for this future prospect is not the only inducement, it is not the main inducement, by which Christians are moved to conform their lives to the will of God. There is only one really effectual restraint of passion, and that is a counter passion ; and the strongest, most abiding counter passion that the human heart can feel is Love : this is the motive power which makes for virtuous life among us. God has shown his love to us in a way that calls forth our responsive love to him ; and we are moved not merely, not chiefly, by dread of the great judgement to come, nor by hope of eternal life, though these are certainly auxiliary motives, but by the love of Christ, which is shed

abroad in our hearts, and makes us exclaim with unshaken sincerity and earnestness, We love him because he first loved us.

Thus we read:—

The love of Christ constraineth us ; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead ; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.*

And again :—

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us we ought also to love one another.†

Hear another passage :—

God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by grace ye are saved ;—we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.‡

And this appeal to the love of God is made again and again, when the sacred writers would provoke us to good works. Thus when the Apostle Paul is

* 2 Cor. V, 14, 15. † 1John IV, 9-11. ‡ Eph. II, 4, 5, 10.

urging purity on the Corinthians, he concludes his address with these words ;—

Ye are bought with a price ; therefore glorify God, in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*

When he is giving them a lesson in liberality, he explains his reason for doing so ; it is ;—

To prove the sincerity of your love : for ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.†

When he is charging the Ephesians to practise mutual forbearance, he says,—

Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.‡

And when he is warning the Philippians against selfishness, he brings forward the same great example.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus ; who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God ; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men ; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.¶

Grateful love is a mighty power, and its range of influence is as wide as life.

* 1 Cor. VI, 20.

† 2 Cor. VIII, 8, 9.

‡ Eph. IV, 32.

¶ Phil. II, 5-8.

LECTURE VII.

THE RITUAL

OF THE

AVESTA AND THE BIBLE.

Ritual is external ; and an religion adapted for human beings must have an external element in it, as well as an internal or spiritual. If there is nothing spiritual about it, it may be a scheme but it is not a religion ; if there is nothing external, it may be suitable for angels but not for men. The amount of ritual practised will probably vary to some extent with the tendency to demonstrativeness in individual worshippers ; one man feels moved to display his feelings more than another, and at one time more than at another.

But the amount commanded by God, though it may vary for different persons, or at different times, will surely be always such as to promote spiritual worship, not to hinder it or usurp its place. God seeks more for loving hearts than for expert hands. Even we would rather have our children love us and make mistakes, than go through performances with faultless accuracy while their hearts are cold. It is therefore not so much the actual amount of ritual in the Avesta and the Bible

that I wish to set before you, as its relation to faith, its predominance or otherwise as compared with the spiritual element in religion. In the Avesta Ritual occupies a large place ; many rules are given in it for cleansing and exorcising, especially in connection with death ; rules for cleansing houses, clothes, wood, corn, vessels of different kinds, after a death has occurred : for cleansing fire in which a dead body has been burnt ; and still more elaborate rules for cleansing men's bodies. These rules include washings, sprinklings, repetition of spells, and other ritualistic performances in great variety. In the Yasna, the Vispered, and the Gahs, frequent mention is made of the "ritual order" ; and many presentations of sacrifice, homage, and praise, are made to the "Lords of the ritual order" : a title which is bestowed on Ahura Mazda and many "Bountiful immortals" besides, such as lords of the water, of the land, of the yearly seasons, &c. &c. In the Afrinagan also offerings are made to day-lords, month-lords, year-lords, and others. And if a man does not offer the proper Myazda, (piece of flesh,) he is to be expelled from the number of the Mazdayasnians. In all these instructions little or no regard is paid to the state of the worshipper's heart ; the offerings are ceremonial and nothing more. Here is a specimen.—

Creator, when they carry dead dogs and dead men along the road, how shall the cattle, the draught-beasts, men and women, the fire, the son of Ahura Mazda, and the Beresma, which is bound in holiness, go on these ways ?

Then answered Ahura Mazda : The cattle and the beasts of burden shall not go on these ways, not the men and women, not the fire, the son of Ahura Mazda, and the Beresma bound in holiness. A yellow dog with four eyes, or a white one with yellow ears, shall they lead three times along this road. By this, O holy Zarathushtra, by leading along a yellow dog with four eyes, or a white one with yellow ears, by this the Drukhs Nakus flies away to the Northern regions. If not, then let them lead a yellow dog with four eyes, or a white one with yellow ears, six times along this road, O holy Zarathushtra ; for by this, O holy Zarathushtra, by leading about a yellow dog with four eyes, or a white one with yellow ears, the Drukhs Nakus flies away to the Northern regions. If not, let them lead a yellow dog with four eyes, or a white one with yellow ears, nine times along this road ; for thus, O holy Zarathushtra, by leading about a yellow dog with four eyes, or a white one with yellow ears, the Drukhs Nakus runs to the Northern regions. A priest shall first walk along this road, speaking the victorious words ;—
“ Yatha ahu vairyo. By the holiness of Vohu-mano. Rulership belongs to Ahura. Whom Ahura Mazda created for a protector to me and my followers. If the bad ones seek to harm me. Besides thee, the fire and Vohu-mano, if I walk after thy works, O holy one, then help me, O Ahura. Tell me this law by the Destur, which smites victoriously

through thy protection and teaching. Make manifest to me in both places a Ratu for the law. Then may Craosha and Vohu-mano come, O Mazda. May my wish be the wish of every one. Ahura Mazda and Spenta Armaiti defend us from our foes. I drive back the Dæva Drukhs. I drive back that which proceeds from the Dævas. I drive back what they have done and created. I drive away the Dævas. Begone O Drukhs. I drive away the Drukhs that he may rush to the North ; he shall not destroy the corporeal world of the pure."

After their desire may the Mazdayasnians then travel on these roads ; cattle, beasts of burden, men and women, the fire, the son of Ahura Mazda, the Beresma bound together in holiness.*

Listen to another sample.—

Zarathushtra asked Ahura Mazda ; Ahura Mazda, heavenly, holiest, Creator of the corporeal world, pure ; how shall the men in the corporeal world provide themselves with a person who will purify the body of one who is affected with impurity, who has come in contact with dead bodies ?

Then answered Ahura Mazda ; They shall look about for a pure man, O holy Zarathushtra, who speaks true words, and recites the Mantra (*i. e.* the Avesta), who is best acquainted with the Mazdayasnian law from a purifier. Let this one hew down the trees on the breadth of this earth, to the

length of nine vibazu (perhaps about nine yards) on all four sides, where it is driest and most free from trees upon this earth, where the land is very clean and dry; where the cattle, the beasts of burden, the fire of Ahura Mazda, the Beresma bound together in holiness, and the pure man, least travel upon the ways.

Creator, how far from fire, how far from water, how far from the bound up Beresma, how far from the pure men?

Then answered Ahura Mazda; Thirty steps from fire, thirty steps from water, thirty steps from the Beresma, thirty steps from the pure men. Thou shalt dig a first hole, two fingers deep in summer, and four fingers deep in winter. Thou shalt dig a second hole, a third, fourth, fifth, sixth, each one step from the other.

How a step?

As three feet. Three other holes shalt thou dig, two fingers deep in summer, four fingers deep in winter.

How far from the former?

As much as three paces.

How three paces?

As one puts the feet together.

How does one put the feet together?

So as to make nine feet. Draw a furrow with a pointed metal tool.

How far distant from the holes?

As much as three paces.

How three paces ?

As one sets the feet together.

How does one set the feet together ?

So as to make nine feet. Then make twelve furrows ; three within which three holes are divided off ; three within which six holes are divided off ; three within which nine holes are divided off. Make three together, divided, upwards and downwards. Bring to the place comprising nine feet three stones ; Kafa, or Dadru, or Zao vareta, or any other of the hard earths. Then let him who is unclean come to these holes. Then place thyself, O Zarathushtra, on the outermost of the furrows. Then recite these words, Nemascha ya armaitis ijacha. Then let the unclean person repeat Nemascha &c. Then the Drukhs is made powerless at each of the words.*

Much disagreeable sprinkling and washing follows, but if any of you wish to know the details, I will leave you to read them for yourselves in the Avesta.

Here is an instruction from Ahura Mazda as to the virtue that attaches to the correct recitation of a particular formula.

This portion of the Ahuna-vairya, O holy Zarathushtra, recited without omission, without negligence, is worth a hundred other meritorious Gathas, which are recited with omission and negligence. Even recited with omission, with negligence, it is equal to ten other principal prayers. Whoso in

* Vend. IX.

this corporeal world, O holy Zarathushtra, utters to me the portion of the Ahuna-vairya, recites uttering, delivers reciting, praises delivering, his soul bring I thrice over the bridge to Paradise, I who am Ahura Mazda, unto the best place, unto the best purity, unto the best lights. But whoso in this corporeal world mutilates this portion of the Ahuna-vairya to me in the recitation, O holy Zarathushtra, be it the half, the third, the fourth, or even the fifth, his soul take I away from the best place, so far as the length and breadth of this earth: now this earth is as broad as long.—I have spoken it (the Ahuna-vairya) out of heavenly holiness, for the whole world of purity, the existing, already in being, and the future, as an example of the works in the world of Mazda. This is the praiseworthy of prayers, of those which I have spoken, do speak, and which are to be spoken. This is as praiseworthy as the whole corporeal world besides. Let the learner learn it; if he retains it, so he gains the victory thereby over dying.*

Here is a blessing on the repetition of another formula with correct ritual accompaniment—

Zarathushtra asked Ahura Mazda : Ahura Mazda, heavenly, holiest, Creator of the corporeal world, pure, what does the man deserve, what does the man gain, what is the reward for the man, who

with right prayer for Rapithwina praises the Lord Rapithwina with washed hands, with washed mortars, with bound Beresma, with uplifted Haoma, at a shining fire, with uttered Ahuna-vairya, moistened on the tongue by the Haoma of a Manthra-bound body?

Him answered Ahura Mazda : As the wind coming from the mid-day region, O holy Zarathushtra, furthers the whole corporeal world, increases it and makes it attain to profitable happiness, so deserves also this man, that will be the reward for this man, who with right prayer for Rapithwina praises the Lord Rapithwina, with washed hands, washed mortars, with bound Beresma, with uplifted Haoma, at a shining fire, with uttered Ahuna-vairya, the tongue wetted with the Haoma, the body bound with the Manthra.*

The way in which certain ritual performances are commended in the Aferin Gahanbar is worth noticing : a very high value is set upon them. There are six paragraphs in this Aferin which commence by telling us how many days were occupied in one portion of the work of creation: Ahura Mazda is speaking, and when he has made this announcement about his work, he continues thus:—

All who celebrate the Gahanbar, or perform, or eat, or give, have thereby as much merit as if any one in the corporeal world had given 1000 ewes

* Afrigan Rapithwina.

together with lambs as a pure gift from love towards the purity of pure souls.—But all who do not offer, do not perform, do not eat, do not give, they are not worthy to offer among the Mazdayasnians, i. e. the Yazatas do not accept their offering, and it is also not fitting that he offer it; and he has from that Gahanbar to the next, on every day, 180 Ster sins.

The next paragraph runs in the same form, but substitutes for the ewes and lambs 1000 cows with their calves; and the next 1000 mares with fillies; and the next 1000 she camels with young ones; and the next, 6000 herds of all kinds; and the next, warm bread for a year long to all the inhabitants of the world, and sweet wine. And the successive maledictions of these paragraphs on those who do not offer, are thus expressed.—

Let no one give heed to their speech; let them hold their word for lies.

They pass for babblers, i. e. the Mazdayasnians account them untrustworthy, and accept not what they give.

They fill a free beast with burdens beyond what is fitting, i. e. amongst the Mazdayasnians seat them not upon a beast.

They forfeit the blessings of the world amongst the Mazdayasnians, i. e. all earthly possessions which they have are not due to them.

They forfeit the Mazdayasnian custom, i. e. they do not make confession, and give at last no account.

In each paragraph also the 180 Ster sins daily are attached to the neglectful ritualist. And then follows this still more terrible sounding curse, apparently applicable to all the above ;

Those who do not celebrate the Gahanbar commit the different sins Tanafur and Margarzan 100 fold, 1000 fold, 10000 fold, of the breadth of the earth, the length of a river, the height of the sun.

To what extent all this is intended to be taken seriously I leave you to judge ; I can but tell you what I find in the book : these quotations are samples ; there is much more of the same kind ; the external ritual is throughout insisted upon as the matter of first importance, while the state of the worshippers heart is a consideration quite left in the back-ground.

Let us turn to the Bible.

The ritual commanded in the Old Testament differs widely from what we have in the New ; we pass to an entirely different kind of worship as we turn from one to the other : and that because the Old Testament details were all symbolical of Jesus Christ's work ; hence when he came and accomplished his work, they were superseded and put away. They consisted in sacrifices and offerings, in washings with water, (always with water only,) and sprinklings with blood, in feastings and trumpet-blowings and great assemblings ; and the true spiritual import of all these was explained again and again to the people who were apt to make too much of the mere forms and

ceremonies. Thus, when the army of the Israelites sent for the ark of God to save them from their enemies, the Philistines, putting their trust in the actual piece of furniture, rather than in God himself, for whose service it had been made; then this is the record :—

When the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again. And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the LORD was come into the camp. And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp :...Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight. And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent; and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen. And the ark of God was taken. *

Thus the material trust of the Israelites was sternly rebuked. A little later, when Saul, the first king, set too high a value on sacrifices of sheep and oxen, and too low on obedience to God's command, the prophet met him with this rebuke :—

* 1 Sam. IV, 5-7, 9-11.

Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.*

King David, when he fell into sin, taught the people a similar lesson by his penitential prayer, which contains these words :—

Thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.†

The people were still found trusting in outward performances, as though these could be a substitute for purity of life, and the prophet Isaiah brought them this message :—

To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me :... Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings

* 1 Sam. XV, 22, 23. † Ps. L, 16, 17,

from before mine eyes ; cease to do evil ; learn to do well ; seek judgment ; relieve the oppressed ; judge the fatherless ; plead for the widow.*

And the prophet Hosea taught them to the same effect :—

I desired mercy, and not sacrifice ; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.†

And Micah, about the same time, prophesied thus :—

Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God ? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old ? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil ? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul ? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good : and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God ?‡

God had indeed commanded a complicated ritual, and it all centered round the tabernacle, of which he showed a model with full working details ; and the people were quite right to practise that ritual, and to practise it carefully ; their fatal mistake was to suppose that any such performances would be acceptable to God, while their hearts were impure and disobedient. The very construction of the tabernacle

* Is. I, 11-13, 16, 17. † Hos. VI, 6. ‡ Mic. VI, 6-8.

proclaimed its transitoriness. It was a three-fold enclosure ; the outer one was open to the sky ; and in it was the altar at which all the animal offerings were presented ; they were typical of the great offering of Jesus Christ ; and while they continued, that great offering was still future : God was pleased to reveal his purpose dimly, before he fulfilled it clearly, and he revealed it by means of a course of ceremonial sacrifices. The Israelites at large were assigned this outer court as their place for worship, and they were not allowed to pass beyond it. A veil hung across the entrance to the tabernacle proper, and screened what was within from common gaze. The priests alone passed within ; and when they did so, they saw on their left hand a seven branched lampstand, on their right a table on which loaves of bread were displayed, and in front of them an altar on which incense was burnt. These three articles, all of pure gold, were representative of worship as Jesus Christ has appointed it for us in this present dispensation : what the Israelites were not allowed to see, is what we have around us to-day ; what they had around them, we are relieved of and have left behind : we have passed from the necessity of learning about a Redeemer to come, and are admitted to the more spiritual worship that he introduced when he came. And this worship is the reality of which the priests in the holy place of the tabernacle saw the types ;—spiritual light from the inspiration of the Spirit of God in our hearts ; spiritual food, as we live by faith on Jesus Christ ; and the

pure offering of prayer and praise on the altar of the divine presence. There was a second veil within which the priests were not commonly allowed to enter. The High Priest alone was permitted to pass it once a year; and the ritual connected with this solemn entry of the High Priest into the most holy place had a special bearing on the Atonement as it was taught to the Israelites. I shall have more to say about this in my next Lecture, which will be on the subject of the Atonement. In this innermost enclosure the sacred ark was kept, of which God had said, "I will meet with you there". The full meaning of this unapproachable reserve is not even now laid bare to us during this present dispensation; it will be manifested when we are carried yet further forward into the presence of God, after Jesus Christ has come back again. Concerning that glorious time still future we are taught:—

Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.*

Thus it is that all the Jewish ritual has been swept away, and realities hidden from their eyes are mani-

* Rev. XXI, 3-5.

fested to ours. But we are still in the flesh, and true worship of God must be offered by our whole being, both body and soul ; and so we have not entirely passed away from the necessity for some externalism in connection with worship ; and in the New Testament Jesus Christ has given us teaching which recognises this necessity. I will give you a passage in which he warns us not to rest in the externalism, and then I will tell you what the chaste and simple forms are which he has commanded us to observe.

He was conversing with a woman of Samaria. The Samaritans had a temple on Mount Gerizim which they considered more holy than the temple of the Jews at Jerusalem. The woman recognised him as a prophet, for he told her things about her private life that were more true than agreeable, and, wishing to divert him from this topic, she raised the question of the rival temples, and said :—

Our fathers worshipped in this mountain ; and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what : we know what we worship ; for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth ; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit ; and

they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

The external forms which Jesus Christ has appointed for use in His Church are three ; they are all simple and solemn ; they are not such as can be performed only in one country or one climate, for he knew that His Church would spread to all countries ; also there is nothing unclean or revolting in them.

The first is the use of water, with solemn invocation of the name of God. This is the form for use when anyone is admitted into the Christian Church, whether it be a newborn infant or a convert from another creed. It is called Baptism. The mere form itself has no power to change anyone's heart, or make him a true Christian ; that can only be done by the Holy Spirit of God who gives new life to the child of God : but the use of water is an outward symbol of this regenerating action of the Holy Spirit ; and a significant symbol at the same time, for as the function of water is to wash our bodies clean, so the function of the Holy Spirit is to cleanse our souls from sin. The two actions, the inward and the outward, are the two aspects of Baptism when it is rightly performed, and this Jesus Christ taught when he said,—

Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.†

The next outward form we use is the Laying on of hands. This is an action that Jesus Christ often

* John IV. 19-24. † John III, 5.

performed upon sick persons when he was healing them ; and after he was gone his Apostles performed it upon persons recently baptised, when special spiritual gifts were conferred upon them, and also upon persons who were being appointed to any office in the Church. The significance of the action is thus perceived to be that it symbolises the imparting of new strength or efficiency for Christian life, or for some phase of Christian work. When the rite is performed upon persons newly baptised, or upon those who were baptised in infancy and have now come to years of discretion, and have been sufficiently instructed in Christian truth, it is known among us by the title Confirmation ; and it is accompanied with prayer to God, that he will strengthen those who are receiving it with the Holy Spirit. The rite is empty and useless, unless, in answer to this prayer, the gift of the Holy Spirit is bestowed.

The third rite is known by the title The Lord's Supper. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the night before he died on the cross for us, appointed us this Supper. The time had come when all the Jewish ceremonies were to be swept away, for he was about to fulfill their meaning and purpose by his death. He called his disciples together to partake for the last time of the Jewish feast, the Passover supper, and he gave them a new feast to take the place of the old. One reason for the change was that the old feast was not suitable for use in every land ; it required roast lamb and bitter herbs ; the new can be celebrated all over

the world, it requires nothing but bread and wine. The old could only be celebrated once a year ; the new is under no such limitation. The old looked forward to a sacrifice yet to be offered; the new looks back upon a sacrifice that has been offered once for all. In both old and new eating was appointed as a symbol of that spiritual sustenance and refreshment, which our souls receive through feeding upon Jesus Christ by faith.

In the New Testament, no less than in the Old, we are repeatedly warned against supposing that any of these external rites can have any helpful effect if they merely external, and nothing more. Here is one instance :—Jesus Christ had been speaking about feeding upon him, and when his disciples called it “ a hard saying ”, he added,

Doth this offend you ? what and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before ? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing : the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. *

And here is another, which I commend to you in contrast to all the “ fiend smiting ” spells of the Avesta:—

We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rules of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto

* John VI, 61-63.

you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God : praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.*

* Eph. VI, 12-18.

LECTURE VIII.

THE TEACHING

OF THE

AVESTA AND THE BIBLE,

ON THE SUBJECT OF THE ATONEMENT.

It is not my purpose, in bringing this subject before you, to detain your attention, upon the exact

meaning of the word Atonement, as if its etymology was of any special interest; what I desire is to show you the teaching of these two books, the Avesta and the Bible, upon points of deep practical importance, and Atonement is certainly of deep importance to us all. The two books are very different in their treatment of it, though to some extent they occupy the same ground. They both alike declare that our actions are not regarded with indifference by Almighty God: he has given us a law; and to disobey that law is to sin against him. They both teach that God will hereafter call us to judgment for our actions in this life, and will vindicate his law by inflicting punishment upon the guilty; also that God's punishment is no slight thing which we may regard with levity, and endure with contempt.

In the Avesta the following account is given of what a man experiences after death:—

Zarathushtra asked Ahura Mazda: Ahura Mazda, heavenly, holiest, Creator of the corporeal world, pure; when a pure man dies, where does his soul dwell during the first night?

Then answered Ahura Mazda: Near his head it seats itself, reciting the Gatha Ustavaiti, praying happiness for itself. On this night the soul sees as much joyfulness as the whole living world possesses.

The same answer is given about the second night, and again about the third. Then we read:—

When the lapse of the third night turns itself to light, then the soul of the pure man goes forward, recollecting itself at the perfume of plants. A wind blows to meet it from the midday region, a sweet-scented one, more sweet-scented than the other winds....The soul of the pure man goes the first step and arrives in the Paradise Humata (Good thoughts); it goes the second step and arrives at the Paradise Hukhta (Good words); it goes the third step and arrives at the Paradise Hvarsta (Good deeds); it takes the fourth step and arrives at the eternal Lights. To it speaks a pure one deceased before, asking it, How art thou, O pure deceased, come away from the fleshly dwellings, from the earthly possessions, from the corporeal world, hither to the invisible, from the perishable world hither to the imperishable? Has it happened to thee (to whom be Hail!) long?

Then speaks Ahura Mazda: Ask not him whom thou askest; for he is come on the fearful, terrible, trembling way, the separation of body and soul. Bring him hither of the food, of the full fatness, that is the food for a youth who thinks, speaks, does good, who is devoted to the good law after death.

A similar question is asked about the soul of a wicked man at death; and the answer is for the first three nights:—

Near the head it runs about whilst it utters the prayer, "Which land shall I praise, whither shall I go praying, &c". In this night the soul sees as much unjoyfulness as the whole living world.

And after the third night the description is :—

Then goes the soul of the wicked man to the impure place, recollecting itself continually by the stench. To it comes a wind blowing from the North region, an evil-smelling one, more evil-smelling than other winds....The fourth step takes the soul of the wicked man and arrives at the darknesses without beginning. To it speaks a formerly deceased wicked one, asking it, How, O deceased wicked one, art thou come away from the fleshly abode, from the earthly possessions, from the corporeal world to the spiritual, from the perishable world to the imperishable? How long (woe to thee !) was it ? Then speaks Angra Mainyus : Ask it nothing, it whom thou askest, which has wandered on the fearful, terrible, trembling way, the separation of body and soul. Bring hither food, poison, and mixed with poison ; for that is the food for a youth who thinks, speaks, and does evil, belongs to the wicked law, after his death.*

The Bible says nothing specially about the first second or third night after death ; it teaches us that the souls of those who are in Christ depart hence to be with him, and that whatever pomp may attend the

* Khordah Avesta XXXVIII.

funeral of a wicked man his soul is in torment. But it also reveals that a great day of judgment will follow the resurrection from the dead, and that men will be judged according to their works. Now if we could appear before the bar of God's justice, and plead Not guilty, if we had perfectly and uninterruptedly fulfilled all the requirements of his holy law, there would be no need to fear that great day of judgment : but none of us can plead Not guilty ; we have all sinned, and the prospect before us is certain and terrible condemnation, unless there is some further revelation that opens for us a door of hope. We have all sinned, even our children are born in sin, they inherit from sinful parents a sinful nature ; and hence, before they are old enough to commit actual sin, they are barred by God's heart-searching justice from any possibility of claiming a sentence of acquittal in their own right : all have come short of the glory of God ; all stand condemned to exclusion from the kingdom of God.

But, thank God, there is a further revelation : the Bible declares that He is merciful as well as just. Mercy is opposed to justice. If an offender stands convicted before some human tribunal, we may conceive of his being sentenced and punished, or we may conceive of his being pardoned and released ; the judge may enforce the law, or the sovereign in the exercise of his prerogative may set the law aside. There may be justice, or there may be mercy ; but there can not be both at once, for the two are mutually exclusive.

And the solemn question to which I invite your attention this evening is this—How can we obtain transference from the domain of justice to that of mercy? If there is any means of obtaining such transference, that is Atonement. I give you this as the meaning of the word.

Atonement means that action or process which delivers us from liability to the penalty denounced against sin, and brings us within the range of God's gracious favour. Is there such an action or process? Is there an Atonement for sinful men? What do the Avesta and the Bible say on this solemn subject?

Before answering that question, let me make sure of my ground by giving you authority from both these books for saying that God is Just and Merciful.

The Avesta does not give the title Judge or Just to Ahura Mazda, in either of the lists of his names in the Ormazd Yasht, though perhaps the title 'Reckoner of service' implies as much; but it frequently declares that the wicked shall be consigned to hell; and as this sentence is pronounced by Ahura Mazda, he is virtually, if not nominally, set before us as Judge.—

The Wise Ahura Mazda has said to me; He among you who will not act according to this Manthra, namely according to the spirit as well as the word, to him will the end of the world turn to downfall.*

* Yasna XLIV.

And the attribute of mercy in like manner, though not expressly declared in the list of names, is implied in the frequent prayers for pardon which appear in the Patets. It is mentioned also in the "Prayer at eating", which begins with these words "In the name of God, the forgiving, pardoning, loving, the Ruler Ahura Mazda." Also the Patet Erani contains these words, rather strangely mixing up mercy with infliction of punishment, but still in terms ascribing pardon to Ormazd:—

On account of every sin which has remained in the world without atonement, am I contented and agreeing to give retribution and atonement with thrice cutting off the head; only I pray from the highest Creator, Ormazd, the Supporter, Forgiver, and Pardoner, that the Yazatas may throw to us and give us an equipment.

The Bible is much clearer and fuller on both points. Concerning the justice of God we have such texts as these.—

All his ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he.*

He shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness.†

Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.‡

* Deut. XXXII, 4. † Ps. IX, 8. ‡ Hab. I, 13.

I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away ; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God ; and the books were opened ; and another book was opened, which is the book of life : and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. *

And statements concerning his mercy are just as decisive. These are samples:—

The LORD passed by before him and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.†

Thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.‡

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.¶

In some passages the two attributes of Justice and Mercy are combined, because God has reconciled them one with the other.

* Rev. XX, 11, 12. † Ex. XXXIV 6, 7. ‡ Ps. LXXXVI, 15.
¶ 1 Pet. I 3.

There is no God else beside me ; a just God and a Saviour ; there is none beside me.*

Mercy and truth are met together ; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.†

He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.‡

But how can these two be reconciled ? How can God be merciful without relinquishing his justice ? I said just now that the question I wished to put before you this evening, for answer out of the two books we are studying, was this, How can we be transferred from the domain of God's justice to that of his mercy ? Now I ask, How can the fact of God's Justice be reconciled with his Mercy ? These two questions are one and the same, unless—and this is an important condition—unless the transfer is effected at the expense of his justice. When a criminal under human law, English or other, is pardoned, it is at the expense of justice: our king may pardon a convict; if he does so he makes no pretence of reconciling justice with mercy ; he simply and avowedly sets justice aside in order to be merciful. Shall we say that God acts thus ? Are we transferred into the domain of mercy by an act of injustice ? Or has he indeed found a way of reconciling these two irreconcilables ? He can do many things that are impossible with us ; can he do this ? and if so, has he done it ? In other words has an Atonement been effected for us, other than by our suffering the full penalty of his holy law ?

* Is. XLV, 21. † Ps. LXXXV, 10. ‡ 1 John I, 9.

In the Vendidad mention is frequently made of Atonement, and the word evidently has just the meaning I have given it, *viz.* Release from impending punishment as the penalty for sin that has been committed. Here is an instance :—

What is his repentance (for a certain sin that has been named,) what his atonement, what are the acts wherewith the sinner removes the punishment? *

The answer is worth reading to you.

He shall kill 1000 head of small cattle. Of all cattle let him bring the small cattle as an offering to the fire, with purity and goodness : with the arms shall he bring offerings to the good water; 1000 loads of hard wood, well hewn, well dried, shall he carry to the fire in purity and goodness; 1000 loads of soft wood let him bring to the fire in purity and goodness; let him bind together 1000 bundles for the Beresma; 1000 Zaothras with Haoma and flesh, proven pure, purified with Dahmas, proven with Dahmas, let him bring to the good water with purity and goodness. Let him kill 1000 snakes which creep upon the belly, 2000 others. Let him kill 1000 lizards which live on land, 2000 water-efts. Let him kill 1000 ants which carry away the corn, 2000 others. Let him lay 30 bridges over running water. Let him strike 1000 blows with the horse goad, 1000 with the

Craosho-charana. That is his punishment, his atonement, his counter-performance, wherewith the guilty one removes the punishment.

There are many other places where Atonement is used as practically equivalent to punishment. In the Patet Qod, after profession of repentance for all sorts of sins, these words are added:—

I have made this Patet as an atonement for sins, to have a share in the reward for good deeds, for joy to the soul, to close to me the way of hell, to open to me the way of Paradise :...I complete good works as much as is necessary to atone for sins:...With reference to the atonement is come, I am agreed to atone in the three nights for the sake of that profit.

Now these quotations, with many others that might be given, show pretty clearly that the Zoroastrian teaching about putting away the guilt of sin is this :—

It may be put away by enduring the penalty;

It may be put away in some cases by repeating certain formulæ ;

It may be put away, at least the worshipper may entertain a hope that it will be put away, by confession and repentance.

The first of these is indeed consonant with the justice of God ; but where is there any mercy shown, if the full penalty is exacted ? It is no glad tidings to the or to tell him that he must suffer all that he

has deserved. The second position raises the question, where is there any justice? Or if God's justice is satisfied with the mere repetition by the sinner of a few spells, he is a feeble God than the ordinary human magistrate, looking neither to the heart nor the life, contented with the veriest lip-service. The third mode of atonement shows a complete misconception of the nature of Repentance. Repentance looks to the future. If a man truly and heartily repents, he will refrain from repetition of the sin he has committed; but this has absolutely nothing to do with the guilt of past actions. If I wound a man, or act so as to cause him loss or annoyance, my repentance will not undo the fact that I have so injured him; it will but secure the man from a repetition of the injury, while the feeling of repentance lasts. If I have committed theft, or perjury, and stand convicted of the crime in a court of justice, how far will it avail towards avoidance of the judge's sentence if I say to him, I repent? It is introducing confusion into the very conception of justice, to suppose that repentance can stand for atonement.

And while on this subject, I must point out another confusion in connection with this matter of taking away sin. There are some deeds, such as burning or burying a corpse, which are denounced in the Avesta as "wicked inexpressible deeds"; much the same teaching is given in this passage:—

Creator of the corporeal world, pure, when one
buries in this earth dead dogs and dead men,

and does not dig them up again for two years, what is the punishment therefor? what is the atonement therefor? what is the purification therefor?

Then answered Ahura Mazda: For this there is no punishment; for this there is no atonement; for this there is no purification; for these inexpressible deeds for evermore.*

The severity of this answer seems to be contradicted in the succeeding passage, but I give it you as it stands. An equally severe answer occurs elsewhere without any appended contradiction, thus:—

If the Mazdayasnians throw on a dead body as much as a reel yields in quantity, then are they not pure in life, and after death they take no share in Paradise. They fill up the place which is appointed for the wicked, the dark, which comes from darkness. This place ye make, ye who are wicked, through your own deeds and your own law, the worst of places.†

In the face of such passages as these is there not confusion in saying that some actions are so meritorious that of themselves they secure a man's entrance into Paradise? Here is an instance:—

Creator, how long can the bodies of men be laid on the Dakhmas until the earth is pure?

Then answered Ahura Mazda; It is not pure, O holy Zarathushtra, before this dust is amalgama-

* Vend. III.

† Vend. V.

ted with the earth. Exhort, O holy Zarathushtra, all men in the corporeal world to destroy these Dakhmas. He who destroys so much of these Dakhmas as is equal to his own body, he has confessed his sins in thoughts and words and deeds; he has atoned with regard to thoughts words and deeds. For the two heavenly powers will not begin a strife against this man in his progress to Paradise. They praise him, O Zarathushtra, stars, moon, and sun. I praise him, I, the Creator Ahura Mazda. "Hail to thee, O man, Thou who art come from the perishable places to the imperishable."*

Again we have this very simple passport into Paradise :—

He who gives (*i. e.* to the pure man) meat of the size of the body of this my bird Parodars (the cock, which crows in the morning), I will not ask this man a second question, I who am Ahura Mazda, at his entrance into Paradise.†

Similar assurance is given in respect of certain correctly intoned repetitions :—

Whoso in this corporeal world, O holy Zarathushtra; utters to me the portion of the Ahura Vairya, recites uttering, delivers reciting, praises delivering, his soul bring I thrice over the bridge to Paradise, I who am Ahura Mazda, unto the best place, unto the best purity, unto the best lights.‡

* Vend. VII.

† Vend. XVIII.

‡ Yasna XIX.

Now if a man has buried a corpse, or thrown clothes on it, and afterwards he destroys a Dakhma, or recites the Ahura Vairya correctly, what will be his fate? The entrance to Paradise is barred against him for the one action, but is thrown wide open to him for the other.

There is confusion here beyond my power to unravel. Moreover the confusion is made more open and direct by the following passage, which comes twice over, in each case immediately preceded by the declaration that certain sins are "inexpiable for ever."

They can be atoned for in the following manner. It is asked whether any one praises and hears the Mazdayasnian law ; or whether any one does not praise and hear the Mazdayasnian law. For the law will take away these sins from those who praise the Mazdayasnian law, if they hereafter do not again commit wicked deeds. For this Mazdayasnian law, O holy Zarathushtra, takes away the bonds from the man who praises it: it takes away deceit, it takes away the murder of a pure man, it takes away the burying of the dead, it takes away the unatoneable sin, it takes away the high swollen guilt, it takes away all sins that one commits. Similarly does the Mazdayasnian law take away all evil thoughts, words, and works, of a pure man, as the strong swift wind clears the sky from the right side. It is well here, O Zarathushtra, when one has performed good deeds. The good Mazdayasnian law abrogates entirely all punishments.*

* Vendidad III, and VIII.

One way of understanding this passage is to take it as promising complete forgiveness for all past sins to a convert on his embracing the Mazdayasnian law; but a strong feeling exists among Parsees against admitting converts from another religion on any terms.

Let us turn to the teaching of the Bible about Atonement. One great difference between this teaching and that of the Avesta, is that it declares Atonement to be what all stand in need of, for that all have sinned.

There is none righteous, no not one:—All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*

Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.†

The Scripture hath concluded all under sin.‡

And forgiveness is offered as a free gift to every one, every one in the whole world, irrespective of nation or class.

Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.¶

As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.§

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.||

* Rom. III, 10, 23. † Ps. LI, 5. ‡ Gal. III. 22. ¶ Rev. XXII, 17. § Rom. V, 18. || Gal. III, 28.

The only persons who are rejected are those who refuse to come and receive the offered blessing.

Ye will not come to me that ye might have life.*

At the same time the justice of God is unimpaired.

Christ Jesus God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God ; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.†

There is no God else beside me ; a just God and a Saviour ; there is none beside me.‡

We are forgiven all our sins, not some certain sins only while others are inexpiable, but all sins, while God retains his justice perfect and untarnished. How is this ? What has happened to make such a combination possible ? What has happened is this,—God the Son has himself come into this world and satisfied the justice of the Almighty on our behalf. He took human nature to himself ; he united human nature with the divine nature in his own person ; he was born as a man ; he accepted on himself our sin, the sin of the whole world, and atoned for it by dying on the cross. The innocent holy Jesus died for all, and the merit of that death is available for you and for me. Justice is fully maintained, for he died. Mercy is triumphant, for that death was on our behalf ; and the benefit of it is offered freely to all. This is the Atonement. Hear

* John V, 40. † Rom. III, 25,26. ‡ Is. XLV, 21.

how the Bible proclaims it without limit or restriction, without terms or conditions.—

God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.†

If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.‡

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.¶

At the same time, to avoid a misunderstanding, and a very serious one, I must call your attention specially to this fact:—the Bible does not say that Jesus Christ saves us from the punishment due to our sins, while we continue deliberately to commit those sins. He saves us from the sins themselves, from the commission of them.

Thou shalt call his name JESUS, for he shall save his people from their sins. §

We are buried with him by Baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.||

* John III, 16. † 2 Cor. V, 19. ‡ 1 John II, 1, 2. ¶ Is. LIII, 6. § Matt. I, 21. || Rom. VI, 4.

He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again.*

And so the penitent Psalmist, when he asked for mercy because he had sinned, asked also for cleansing so that he should not fall into that sin again.

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.†

This is the Gospel of Jesus Christ ; that by his death which he suffered for us on the cross, the power of sin is broken, and the barrier which the justice of God threw across our path is carried away : and now what keeps us from plunging into fresh sin is something far stronger than the dread of punishment in the distant future, it is the all prevailing power of love : " We love him because he first loved us."

There remains yet one point for comparison on this subject between our two books. I have shown you how the Avesta recognises that one mode of Atonement is by the guilty person enduring the whole penalty himself. The Bible does the same : it teaches that unless we come truly and sincerely to Jesus, mere profession is of no avail : unless we come giving him our hearts, as well as our words, our sins remain unatoned for, and we must endure the full

* 2 Cor. V, 15. † Ps. LI, 1, 2.

penalty ourselves. It constantly speaks of our blessings being conferred upon us through Christ, of our rising above the evil of this world by Christ, of our obtaining the privilege of sonship with Christ, of our life with God being lived in Christ : and those who continue to live according to the course of this world are without Christ. Very clearly the Christian position is expressed in this passage:—

If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.*

And just as clearly in this, and many other passages, the life to which we are called is shown to be a life of good works:—

We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.†

And a solemn warning is given to those who sought to gain merit by their own works, that their aim was inconsistent with the grace of the Gospel.

Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law ; ye are fallen from grace.‡

This aim was impossible of attainment.

* Rom. V, 10, 11.

Eph. II, 10.

‡ Gal. V, 4.

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.*

The promises of God are rich and full and free, but they are exclusively through Jesus Christ, who is the Door, the only Door. The alternative before us is,—Accept eternal life in Christ Jesus, or reject him and forfeit eternal life. The ritual that was commanded to the Israelites under Moses expressed this alternative in a very striking manner. They were taught the great truths of the Gospel in a series of figures: the Feast of the Passover, of which the central feature was the sacrifice of a lamb, taught them about the death of Christ: the Feast of the fiftieth day, when they offered the first wheaten loaves of the new harvest, taught them about the gift of the Holy Spirit on the fiftieth day after the resurrection of Christ from the dead: the Blowing of trumpets on the first day of the seventh month taught them about the great trumpet blowing that will call the dead from their graves at the second coming of Jesus Christ to this earth: and the Feast of special rejoicing, which began a fortnight later, typified for them the unspeakable joy which God has prepared for his children in the life to come. Between these last two there was a solemn fast commanded; it was held on the day called the Day of

* Gal. II, 16.

Atonements, or Expiations. The detail of observance is given in the 16th chapter of Leviticus. It was the only day of the whole year when the Most Holy place of the tabernacle was to be entered, and the entrance was made by the High Priest alone. Before he entered it he took two goats, and cast lots between them at the door of the tabernacle ; one lot was for the Lord, and the other was for Azazel, a Jewish term for the evil spirit. The treatment of these two goats represented the two Atonements : the blood of one was brought into the Most Holy place, and sprinkled before the Lord ; this is the true Atonement through Jesus Christ, whose blood avails for us before God in heaven. And the other goat was sent away far from the tabernacle ; this is the atonement without Christ, when a man is cast forth from the presence of God, and given over to Azazel to bear the punishment in his own person for all the sins he has committed. This awful doom Jesus Christ expressed without any type or figure, when he gave a description of the great judgment to come and told us that the King will banish the wicked from his presence, and will say to them, " Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."*

The Atonement which he has wrought delivers us from this terrible sentence in the next world, because it delivers us from sin in this present world.

* Matt. XXV. 41.

LECTURE IX.

THE TEACHING

OF THE

AVESTA AND THE BIBLE,

ON THE SUBJECT OF PRAYER.

The word Prayer is sometimes used in the restricted sense of asking petitions ; sometimes it is used to include all communion of the worshipper with God, whether he is uttering petition, or confession, or praise, thanksgiving, or enquiry. It is in the wider sense that I use the word now, and I would define it,—Conscious Communion with God. Of course it can be conscious only as the heart of the worshipper rises above formalism, and realises that he is truly addressing himself to a living personal God. As we study Prayers, or statements about Prayer, in a book, the question as to whether the communion with God is consciously maintained or not, is for the time being laid aside ; we are approaching the subject as students not as worshippers. As a matter of proportion this subject of Prayer is very prominent in the Avesta : it occupies a large place in each section of the book. It is

prominent also in the Bible, but not to the same extent, some parts of the Bible being almost exclusively historical, and having comparatively little to do with Prayer. Almost the whole of the Avesta is occupied with addresses to Ahura Mazda, or some other heavenly being, and the answers given to these addresses. Thus, beginning with the oldest portion, the Gatha Ahunavaiti consists of seven Yasnas or hymns. The first contains a prayer offered by Zarathushtra for the gifts of the Good mind, and for long life; also an enquiry as to how the world first arose. No answer to the prayer is annexed. The second begins with an appeal from the soul of the Bull asking for instruction in herbage, and protection from violence.* Zarathushtra is assigned as guardian and instructor, and he then prays for ability to fulfil the task. As before there is no answer given to this prayer. The third Yasna is rather declaratory than precatory, and contains a statement of creation by the two powers who are called Twins. The fourth is an address to Ahura Mazda asking what are the rewards for the wicked, and how a man may become righteous. Again there is no reply. The

* "In the old Persian mythology. a Primeval Bull (or Cow) was the first and sole inhabitant of the earth; and being slain by Angra Mainyus, all kinds of profitable corn and grain were produced from his body, while his soul went to heaven, where it complained that the world was now without protection, and would be destroyed by Angra Mainyus. Hereupon the Fravashi (soul) of Zarathushtra was shown to the disconsolate animal, who forthwith became pacified." Note on Yashua I, 6, in Spiegel's Avesta.

fifth is mainly the utterance of the prophet expressing confidence in the success of his cause. The sixth curses disobedience, and prays for knowledge, enjoyment, and strength. The seventh seems to have been written in some perturbation of mind, for it addresses Ahura Mazda in this hesitating way,—“If you really exist Mazda, together with Asha and Vohu-mano.” (Asha is the genius of fire; Vohu-mano is the protector of all living creatures. They are two of the Amesha Spentas.) It asks for instruction in goodness of words and deeds.

The second Gatha also consists of seven Yasnas; it is called Haptanhaiti. The first Yasna praises Ahura Mazda, and prays for pleasantness and fodder for the cattle. The second is an address to Ahura Mazda, and to the fire. The third is a short song of praise to Ahura Mazda and the Fravashis. The fourth praises the earth and the waters. The fifth praises the Bull, the souls of men, and the Amesha Spentas. The sixth asks for Ahura's rewards now and to all eternity. The seventh praises Ahura Mazda, and various other beings including Zarathushtra.

The third Gatha is called Ustvaiti; it consists of four Yasnas. The first is mainly addressed to Ahura Mazda by Zarathushtra, praising him, and asking for blessings, and professing obedience. It contains this rather bold declaration:—“I, Zarathushtra, rejoice myself with the heavenly, I am of all the holiest.” The second is a series of enquiries addressed to Ahura Mazda; they remain unanswered. The third contains a series of announce-

ments from Ahura Mazda. The fourth begins with a complaint of having little wealth and few followers; it contains both praise and petition, but the sense is somewhat obscure.

The fourth Gatha is called Spenta Mainyu ; it has four Yasnas. The first addresses Spenta Mainyu jointly with Mazda Ahura, asking for good gifts. The second addresses Asha as well as Mazda; it asks for victory over evil, and for instruction as to when this victory will be fully accomplished. The third again addresses Asha and Mazda; it prays for the destruction of wicked rulers. The fourth, taking up a similar address, asks for aids of grace. I quote the first two verses as a sample:—

How and whose protection shall my soul desire?

Who is for the cattle, what man is acknowledged as
my protector?

Besides Asha and thee, Mazda Ahura,

The desired, the invoked by the best spirit.

How shall he, Mazda, desire the helpful cow,

Who wishes her active for this world,

To live well during many years?

Give me in the world manifest dwellings as a gift.

The last two lines, Spiegel says, are "translated conjecturally."

The fifth Gatha is Vohu Khshathra; it is a single Yasna, and contains a prayer for the best gifts to be bestowed on various persons, including the cow. Asha is still addressed as well as Ahura Mazda.

The sixth Gatha, Vahistoisti, is a single Yasna, in which, with reference to the marriage of Zarathushtra's daughter, Ahura Mazda is invoked as the giver of blessing.

The last Gatha is Airyama Ishya; it is a short aspiration after joy and purity, followed by a eulogy of the Gathas as profitable in many ways and victorious; they are even personified as lords and governors, and are offered praise along with Asha and Vohu-mano.

The other Yasnas, 44 in number, are mainly invocations of the different objects of worship, being the forms for use on occasion of offering sacrifice to those beings. The ninth Yasna has a quasi-historical introduction : it is a song of praise to the Haoma plant; and in it is a conversation between Haoma and Zarathushtra, in which Haoma declares the blessings that were granted to the first four persons who prepared him; viz. Vivanhao, to whom Yima was given as a son; Athwya, to whom Thraetaono was given as a son; Thritha, to whom Urvakhshya and Kcrehaspa were given as sons; Pourushashpa, to whom Zarathushtra was given as a son.

The 27 sections of the Vispered, the 22 Yashts, and a few shorter pieces, are much in the same strain, invocations of many different beings, with offerings and praises, and here and there a statement of benefits accruing to those who have thus worshipped them. There is much repetition of thought and even of words, so much as to make a considerable demand upon a student's patience.

There are two Sirozahs belonging to the Yashts, which are enumerations of the beings invoked on the several days of the month ; there is not very much difference between them ; they offer worship to 123 beings, not reckoning plurals, such as—“all mountains,” “all Yazatas.”

The Patets are confessions of sin, very detailed, hypothetically expressed, so that each worshipper may appropriate the particulars suitable to his own case.

The Vendidad also, which is in substance a judicial code, is couched in a form such that it may fairly be included among the Prayers of the Avesta, for it is nearly all enquiries addressed by Zarathushtra to Ahura Mazda, and his responses to the same.

There are some forms of prayer which recur very often : the most common are the Ashem vohu, which ascribes happiness to those who are pure ; the Ahuna vairya, which declares that by the will of the Lord good works in this world will be rewarded richly in the next ; and the Yenhe hatam, which is an announcement of sacrifice to all males and females of superior sanctity. One Prayer in the Khordah Avesta stands with this heading,—“Prayer on reciting the Ashem vohu twelve hundred times.” And another has this heading,—“Prayer on reciting the Yatha Ahu Vairyo (*i.e.* the Ahuna vairya) twelve hundred times.”

As in many of the prayers a great multitude of beings, other than the Creator, receive adoration, so it is also

in the forms of professing Zoroastrianism ; these are various ; each contains the names of lords or heavenly beings to whom adoration is offered. One of the forms is as follows.—

I confess myself a Mazdayasnian, a follower of Zarathushtra, a foe of the Daevas, devoted to belief in Ahura : (Morning). To Havani, the pure, lord of the pure, for praise, honour, satisfaction, and laud. To Savanhi and to Visya, the pure, lord of purity, praise, &c. (Midday). To Rapithwina, the pure, lord of purity, praise, &c. To Fradat-fshu and to Zantuma, the pure, lord of purity, praise, &c. (Evening). To Uzaycitina, the pure, lord of purity, praise, &c. To Fradat Vira and to Daqyumr, the pure, lord of purity, praise &c. To the immortal Sun, shining, with swift steeds, be Khshnaothra for praise, &c. Yatha ahu vairyo.

The Mazdayasnian confession in the Gatha dialect is frequently prefixed to the Patets ; like the preceding it is distinctly polytheistic. The words are these :—

I praise the well thought, well spoken, well performed, thoughts, words, and works. I lay hold on all good thoughts, words, and works. I abandon all evil thoughts, words, and works. I bring to you, O Amesha Spentas, praise and adoration, with thoughts, words, and works, with heavenly mind, the vital strength of my own body.

No passage occurs in the Avesta similar to the first of the ten Commandments in the Bible,—“Thou

shalt have no other gods before me." Also there is little mention of spiritual qualification in the worshipper; provided the ritual is correct in form all is well; even mental attention is not necessary, though it is advisable, and increases the merit of the recitation. Thus we find one of the common formulæ ordered to be repeated 3, 5, 12, 21 times, besides the 1200 fold repetition for which a special prayer is provided. I will give you one more passage in which a somewhat complicated ritual is offered as acceptable to the Amesha Spentas and other objects of worship.—

For the offering, prayer, satisfaction, and praise of the whole world of purity. Then we make them known: to the Fravashi of Zarathushtra, the holy, pure, for offering, prayer, contenting, and praise; to him who desires purity in both worlds, together with all the pure Fravashis of the departed pure, of the living pure, of the yet unborn pure, of the profitable who progress forwards. These Haomas, these Haoma utensils, these covers, these Myazdas, these stones, the first among created things, these stone mortars brought hither, O golden Haoma, these iron mortars brought hither, O golden Haoma, this Haoma juice, this Baresma bound together in holiness, these bodies and strengths, these flowing Zaothras, this pure Haoma, the well created cow, the pure man, the heavenly souls of the pure, the heavenly souls of the profitable, this flesh of living beings, uplifted in purity, this tree Hadha-naepata, up-

lifted with purity, the Haoma juice of the good waters, the stone mortars, the iron mortars, the Baresma branch, the helpful prayers at the right time, the successful recitation and doing of the good Mazdayasnian law, the singing of the Gathas, the helpful right prayer to the pure Lords, the wood, the odoriferous for thee, the fire, the son of Ahura Mazda, all good things created by Ahura Mazda, and which have a pure origin, we give and we make known. 'Then we make them known : to the Amesha Spentas, the good rulers, the wise, the ever-living, the ever-profitable.*

The Bible presents a great contrast to all this. It contains instruction of various kinds on the subject of prayer ; commands to pray ; promises of answer to prayer ; instances of men who offered prayer and were accepted, samples or models of prayer ; guidance as to the spirit in which we should pray.

These are some of the instances of successful prayer which it records for our encouragement.—

Abraham lived for a while not very far from Sodom and some other cities that were in the plain now called the Plain of the Dead Sea, and God revealed to him that he was about to destroy those cities because of the wickedness of the inhabitants ; Abraham interceded for them on this wise,—

Abraham drew near and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked ? Peradventure

there be fifty righteous within the city ; wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein ? That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked, and that the righteous should be as the wicked ; that be far from thee. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ?

And the LORD said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.

And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes : peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous ; wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five ?

And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it.

And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there.

And he said, I will not do it for forty's sake.

And he said unto him, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak : peradventure there shall thirty be found there.

And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there.

And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord ; peradventure there shall be twenty found there.

And he said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake.

And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once? peradventure ten shall be found there.

And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake.*

Jacob left his home a solitary wanderer through fear of his brother, who was angry with him to such an extent that he determined to kill him. God promised to take care of him. After twenty years he returned with possessions of flocks and herds and a large family; his brother came to meet him with 400 armed men, and Jacob prayed for the promised protection; and the intensity of his earnestness is expressed by the figure of a wrestling contest. The narrative is this :—

Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with him.

And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.

And he said unto him, what is thy name?

And he said, Jacob (*i. e.* Supplanter).

And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel (*i. e.* A prince of God): for as

* Gen. XVIII, 23—32.

a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name.

And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there.

And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel (*i. e.* the face of God) : for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.*

Moses again and again interceded for the people of Israel, when they had fallen into sin and incurred the anger of God. Here is his account of his intercession on one occasion when they had sinned so grievously that God threatened even to destroy them :—

I fell down before the Lord, as at the first, forty days and forty nights ; I did neither eat bread nor drink water ; because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure, wherewith the LORD was wroth against you to destroy you. But the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also.—I prayed therefore unto the Lord, and said, O Lord GOD, destroy not thy people and thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed through thy greatness, which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Remember thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ; look

* Gen. XXXII, 24—30.

not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin ; lest the land whence thou broughtest us out say, Because the LORD was not able to bring them into the land which he promised them, and because he hated them, he hath brought them out to slay them in the wilderness. Yet they are thy people and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest out by thy mighty power and by thy stretched out arm.*

Elijah was a prophet raised up to withstand the idolatry into which the kings of Israel were leading the people. He gave himself with his whole heart to the carrying out of God's purpose, as it was revealed to him. This purpose included a three years' famine, during the reign of king Ahab ; and then, when the worshippers of the false gods were put to shame by manifest interposition from God himself, an abundant rain fell and the famine was at an end. Elijah prayed for the drought, he prayed for the manifest interposition, he prayed for the rain. The closing section of the narrative, which tells us of his prayer for the rain, runs thus :—

Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink, for there is a sound of abundance of rain. So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel ; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees : and said to his servant Go up now, look

* Deut. IX, 18, 19, 26-29.

toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again : seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain.*

Daniel lived during the captivity of his people in Babylon ; and when Cyrus had conquered Babylon, Daniel knew that the appointed time for which the captivity should continue was drawing to a close. He prayed for his nation's deliverance ; the cause of the captivity had been gross sin against God's commandments long persevered in ; he mingled confession of this sin with his entreaties. This is a portion of his prayer :—

I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments, we have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments ; neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name

* 1 Kin. XVIII, 41—45.

to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land...O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets....O my God, incline thine ear and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name; for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies. O Lord, hear: O Lord, forgive: O Lord hearken and do: defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.*

Besides these and many other prayers, the whole book of Psalms is a model of communion with God. It combines confession and petition with praise and thanksgiving, and expressions of joy and confidence in God. There are also occasional prophecies, and statements of the Psalmist's own experience as the groundwork of prayer or praise. Listen to one sample, taken from a penitential Psalm. The incident upon which it rests as groundwork, is that king David had fallen deeply into sin, and repented at the rebuke of a prophet.—

* Dan. IX, 4—6, 8—10, 18, 19.

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness ;

According unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity ;

And cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my transgressions ;

And my sin is ever before me.

Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight ;

That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

Behold I was shapen in iniquity ;

And in sin did my mother conceive me.

Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts ;

And in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean :

Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.

O Lord, open thou my lips ; and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.

For thou desirest not sacrifice ; else would I give it ;

Thou delightest not in burnt offering.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit ;

A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*

In the New Testament these historical and liturgical examples are further enforced by direct precept and encouragement.

* Ps. LI, 1—7, 15 17.

Thus Abraham's importunity is supported by such a charge as this ;—" Men ought always to pray, and not to faint."* And Jesus Christ added a parable to make this teaching more impressive.

We are reminded of Jacob's earnestness in such expressions as these:—

Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith.†

Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.‡

The intercession of Moses is paralleled by frequent instances of prayer on behalf of others offered or asked for. Take this as an instance.—

I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man ; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith ; that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.¶

* Luke XVIII, 1.

† 1 Thess. III, 10.

‡ Col. IV, 12.

¶ Eph. III, 14-19.

Elijah's successful prayer is held up directly as a pattern :—

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain : and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth brought forth her fruit.*

Daniel's confession is suggested as an example by this teaching:—

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.†

And then as to the spirit in which we should offer prayer we have much instruction : this is far more important than the mere form.

It must be a spirit of faith.

Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.‡

* James V, 16-18. † 1 John I, 8, 9. ‡ Mark XI, 22-24.

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering : for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.*

It must be a spirit of forgiveness towards others.

When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.†

It must be a spirit of deepest sincerity.

When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the synagogue and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you they have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret : and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.‡

And so the prayers must not be mere repetitions, as though it was any object to go through a form a specified number of times.

But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do : for they think that they shall

* James I, 5-7. † Mark XI, 25, 26. ‡ Matt. VI, 5, 6.

be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them : for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.*

Also prayer should be accompanied with thanksgiving.

In every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.†

And it must be offered in the name of Jesus Christ, not in our own name, because of our unworthiness.

Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.‡

Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.¶

A pattern prayer has been given us by Jesus Christ, with command to use it ; and the Christian Church does use it gladly, thankfully, constantly. It holds up before us as the first object for which we should pray, not our own worldly concerns, nor even our own spiritual welfare, but the furtherance of God's glory, and we begin by praying that his name may be hallowed, his kingdom may come, his will may be done perfectly. Then after these petitions we come to our own needs ; and one clause asks for the supply of our wants, temporal and spiritual ; another implies acknowledgment of our sinfulness,

* Matt. VI, 7, 8. † Phil. IV, 6. ‡ John XIV, 13, 14
John XVI, 23.

it asks for forgiveness ; another regards the future that lies before us, and asks for safe guidance in the midst of the temptations that beset us ; and the last request lays our whole environment before God, and asks him to order it all so that no evil shall come upon us. The Prayer itself is this :—

OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN,
HALLOWED BE THY NAME.

THY KINGDOM COME.

THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH, AS IT IS
IN HEAVEN.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.

AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE
FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS.

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION ;
BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL.

FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, AND
THE POWER, AND THE GLORY, FOR
EVER. AMEN.

LECTURE X.

THE MIRACLES

OF THE

AVESTA AND THE BIBLE.

In speaking to you about miracles, I would commence by utterly disavowing and disallowing all *a priori* rejection of them as impossible. To talk of their being impossible is simply foolish ; such talk is not exalting reason, it is contrary to reason. Is it reasonable to say that a lawgiver cannot alter his laws, or a manager his procedure ? It is equivalent to saying that if I construct a machine which runs on smoothly for a limited time, the fact of its doing so makes it impossible for me afterwards to interfere with its running. Reason declares that the maker can alter his handywork, the lawgiver can modify his laws ; at least it will demand very cogent proof before admitting the contrary. Now the allegation that miracles are opposed to scientific results is in a sense true, but to infer from that they are therefore impossible, is nothing short of absurd. Every one would perceive the absurdity readily enough, if a young engineering

student was to argue that because a certain modification of a machine would interfere with the maintenance of its working as hitherto carried on, therefore such a modification was impossible. The argument against miracles from their being contrary to scientific results is on a par with this. The province of science is the study of current procedure throughout the universe ; it can tell nothing about its original institution, nor about its subsequent modification, nor about its ultimate determination : but it can and does tell this,—that the unknown origination must have been a fact, and subsequent modifications may also be facts. And we at the present day, if we persist in the groundless denial of the possibility of miracles, are more inexcusable than our predecessors were ; for we understand, better than they did, the fallibility of our own ideas as to what is possible or impossible. We have seen many things accomplished that our ancestors would have supposed impossible ; and yet their reasoning faculties were not inferior to ours. What would our grandfathers have said, if they had been told that enquiries would be sent between India and England, and answers received within the space of a few minutes ? What would our fathers have said, if they had been told that by means of photography a surgeon would be able to see exactly what was amiss with a patient who had sustained some internal injury ? What would we have said ourselves a few years ago, if some one in advance of the time had promised to do for us what we now take as matters of course in the electric light,

the telephone, and other recent inventions? We should have said, Impossible: and then, when the things were actually presented to us, we should have retracted the word, and admitted that we had been mistaken. This has happened so often, that we are inexcusable if we have not learned by this time to be diffident about pronouncing a thing impossible, only because it is unprecedented. Our acceptance or rejection of an alleged miracle must be rested on evidence: of course the evidence must be such as to bear the weight of the proof it purports to bring: and if the alleged miracle seems to us unworthy of name of God, or contrary to his revealed will, we shall scan the evidence the more closely. Hence it is a fair and even necessary question when books are before us that narrate miracles—Are they true? But to condemn them as untrue, solely because they narrate miracles, is neither necessary nor fair.

Now let us proceed to look at the miracles we find narrated in these two books.

In the Avesta there are but two occasions, subsequent to the creation itself, on which miracles in the physical world are recounted. Revelations and triumphant encounters with evil spirits may perhaps be reckoned as miracles, but not in the physical sphere. The first occasion is the reign of Yima. That hero is said to have enlarged the earth, and to have banished heat and cold, old age and death from his domain. The narrative is given in the 2nd Fargard of the Vendidad as follows:—

I' (Ahura Mazda) sent word to Yima; Yima the fair, son of Vivanhao, this earth has waxed full of cattle, beasts of burden, men, dogs, and red burning fires. The cattle, the beasts of burden, and the men find no room for themselves. Then went Yima forth to the stars, towards mid-day, to the way of the sun: he cleft this earth with his golden plough: he bored into it with the spear; saying, With love, O Spenta Armaiti, go forth and go asunder at my prayer; thou supporter of the cattle, the beasts of burden, and mankind. Then Yima caused this earth to cleave asunder a third part greater than it was before. Then Yima made the earth cleave asunder two thirds greater than it was before. After that Yima made the earth cleave asunder three thirds greater than it was before. On it strode forth the cattle, the beasts of burden, and the men.

In the Yasna the other portion of Yima's miracle is mentioned, and it is declared to have been the reward granted to his father for the meritorious act of preparing the Haoma.

Zarathushtra spake; Praise be to the Haoma. Who first, O Haoma, prepared thee in the corporeal world? What holiness became thereby his share? What wish was bestowed on him?

Then answered Haoma, the pure, who is far from death, Vivanhao has, first of men, in the corporeal world prepared me. This holiness became thereby his portion, this wish was granted

to him? that a son was born to him, Yima, the bright, possessing a good congregation, the most majestic of beings, who most gazes at the sun among men; since on account of his rule men and cattle were immortal, water and trees not dried up, the catable food inexhaustible. In the wide rule of Yima there was no cold, no heat, no old age and death, no envy created by the Daevas. Father and son walked along, fifteen years old in countenance, each of the two, so long as Yima of the good rule, the son of Vivanhao, governed.*

In the Khordah Avesta this miracle is said to have been wrought by the favour of Drvaspa, when Yima brought her an offering. This title means "possessing sound horses;" it is an epithet of Geus-urva, the Soul of the Bull, *i. e.* the special protector of cattle.

To her offered Yima Khshaeta, with good assembly, from the high Hukairya, 100 horses, 1,000 horned cattle, 10,000 head of small cattle, bringing offering. 'Grant me, O good, profitable Drvaspa, the favour that I may bring fat herds to the creatures of Mazda, that I may bring immortality to the creatures of Mazda; that I may remove far away hunger and thirst from the creatures of Mazda, that I may take away old age and death from the creatures of Mazda, that I may remove far away hot wind and cold from the creatures of Mazda, for a thousand years.' Drvaspa, the

* Yasna IX.

strong, pure, created by Mazda, granted this favour to him, the nourisher, the bringer of offerings, the dispenser, the offerer, the implorer of female givers for a favour.*

There is another passage very similar to this in the Ram Yasht, but there it is the Air that granted Yima the boon he prayed for: and in the Ashi Yasht we are told the same favour was accorded him by Ashis Vanuhi.

The other miraculous performance was achieved by Thraetaona: it was the smiting of the fiend Dahaka. Fiends are as a rule not corporeal, and many contests with them are mentioned in the Avesta; but this one seems exceptional, because Dahaka is called "the most terrible Drug in the corporeal world." If this word "corporeal" does not bring the smiting of Dahaka into the category of physical miracles, then Yima's achievement stands alone. The story of Thraetaona occurs five times; and the several passages are inconsistent with one another much in the same way as those which tell us about Yima. In the 9th Yasna the miracle is said to have been secured to Thraetaona because his father prepared Haoma for food. In the Aban Yasht it is granted him in answer to his prayer to Ardivi Sura. In the Gosh Yasht the prayer so answered was addressed to Drvaspa. In the Ram Yasht it is the Air, and in the Ashi Yasht it is Ashis Vanuhi, that accepts the prayer and grants the favour.

* Gosh Yasht.

Zoroaster himself also is credited with having wrought some miracles, but they are mentioned only in other works, not in the Avesta.

Looking to the character of these miracles, the only purpose I can discover in Yima's first work is to supplement the deficiency of creation ; the world not having been made large enough in the first instance for its future inhabitants; but it is so egregiously at variance with scientific truth, that we can but pass it by as a poetical rhapsody. The purpose in his later work we may surmise to have been to encourage Mazdayasnians in imitating his holiness. But then if no one since the millennium of Yima has been holy enough to gain, either for himself or his friends, immunity from cold and heat, old age and death, the encouragement is not great, and the miracle is isolated from connection with actual life in these modern days. Thraetaona's successful encounter with the corporeal Drug is equally isolated from current life, unless corporeal Drugs are still to be met with. And if we look to the alleged occasions of these two miracles, Yima's second and Thraetaona's, they appear to encourage, either the preparation of Haoma, or else the adoration of one or other of these four heavenly beings, Ardvi Sura, Drvaspa, the Air, or Ashis Vanuhi. It is not clear how any living man can ascertain which of these five deities he ought to approach. And, apart from this ambiguity, what are we to say to the entire suppression of Ahura Mazda as an object of worship !

In the Bible many miracles are recorded, and it is not always easy to say whether the man who had to do with them was in any sense the worker of them, or not. In every instance the work was the work of God: sometimes he simply showed his servants a miraculous work for their instruction or encouragement; sometimes he wrought one through a human agent, so that it is said to have been done by the man. Thus the closing verses of the book of Deuteronomy ascribe miracles to Moses as his doing.

There arose not a prophet since in Israel, like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, in all the signs and the wonders which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land; and in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses showed in the sight of all Israel.*

Whereas in the similar retrospect which we have from Moses himself, these works are ascribed directly to God, and he makes no mention of his own part in the performance of them.

Thou shalt well remember what the LORD thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt; the great temptations which thine eyes saw, and the signs and the wonders, and the mighty hand, and the stretched out arm, whereby the LORD thy God brought thee out.†

* Deut. XXXIV, 10-12. † Deut. VII, 18, 19.

In some cases however it is quite clear that the man in whose history the miracle occurred, was a recipient merely and spectator.

The periods or epochs of miraculous intervention are mainly four in number; at other times miracles were less frequent, or even wholly absent.

The first of these four is the period of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, and their planting in the land of Canaan, a period of about half a century. Previous to this no miracles were wrought that are ascribed to human agency ; though marvellous works were done by God, and many revelations were granted by him to men. But with the Exodus a new era begins. Moses and Aaron wrought three miracles before Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, to convince him that the demand they brought him was truly from God : the demand was that he should let Israel go out of his land. On his refusal they inflicted a series of ten plagues upon him, until at last he consented and let the people go. These ten plagues are one after another directly ascribed to God, but it is also said that Moses and Aaron did them. The Exodus itself was accomplished by the dividing of the waters of the Red Sea, so that the people crossed on dry ground, and when the Egyptians attempted to cross after them, the waters returned to their former level, and the Egyptians were drowned. During the subsequent wanderings of the people in the Arabian wilderness these miracles were wrought among them :—Bitter waters were sweetened by cast-

ing a certain tree into them. Water was brought out of a rock for the people to drink when Moses smote the rock with his rod. This miracle was repeated later on, only that Moses was commanded to speak to the rock, not smite it. The people were fed by a special supply of quails, and by a deposit on the ground that looked something like hoar frost, but was really substantial food : it was called Manna. (In the Hebrew " Man Hu," which means " What is it?") This Manna came daily, six days in the week, throughout the years of the wanderings in the wilderness; and on the sixth day in each week the amount of it was doubled, so that the people should not have to gather it on the seventh day, their sacred sabbath. The miraculous supply of quails was repeated on a larger scale later on. Another miracle that lasted continuously through the years of the wanderings was that the people's clothes never waxed old, nor did their shoes wear out. On the occasion of a rebellion against God and against Moses, the ground opened and swallowed up the leaders of the rebellion. Following upon this rebellion and its suppression, rods were taken, one from each tribal chief, and put in the holy place of the tabernacle ; the next morning the rod of Aaron was found to have blossomed and borne almonds. Fiery serpents bit the people, and many died; then a serpent of brass was set up on a pole, and all the sick men who looked at that serpent of brass were healed. After the death of Moses, his successor, Joshua, led the people into the land that had been promised them; and the entrance into it

was effected by the waters of the river Jordan being parted, so that the channel was laid bare; the river was in flood at the time. The first city that Joshua attacked was gained by the walls falling down flat before a single blow was struck. When a confederacy of kings was put to flight before the Israelites, Joshua called to the sun and moon to stand still, that daylight might be lengthened out, and the victory be made more complete; and it was so at his word.

The second great occasion when miracles were wrought was during the period of the monarchy. A king of Israel married an idolatrous princess from a neighbouring country, and set up idolatry in his own land; he put to death all the prophets of God that he could lay his hands upon, and gathered round him 850 prophets of the false gods he had set up. Then Elijah, and after him Elisha, were sent to rebuke this idolatry, and recal the nation to the worship of the true God and they were enabled to work miracles. Elijah prayed, and the rain was withheld for three years and a half; he prayed again and the rain fell in abundance. I told you something about this in my last Lecture; now I will tell you a little more. When the three years and a half were over, the prophet came before the king, and denounced his idolatry as the cause of the famine, and demanded of him that he should gather a great assembly of the people to witness a solemn testing of this question, whether Jehovah, the ancient God of Israel, or Baal, the new god that the king had introduced, was the true God.

The test he proposed was that the worshippers of Baal should prepare a bullock for sacrifice on an altar, and pray to their god to send fire: he would prepare another bullock in like manner, and pray to Jehovah: "The God that answereth by fire, let him be God." The people accepted the proposal, and the bullocks were placed upon the altars: the prophets of Baal prayed and danced for hours, and cut themselves till the blood gushed out upon them; but no Baal answered; the carcase of the bullock remained as they had placed it. Then Elijah drew near, and prayed, after first ordering the sacrifice to be drenched with water. I will read you his prayer, and what followed.

It came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.

Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it they fell on their faces; and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God.*

* 1 Kin. XVIII, 36—39.

There are other miracles connected with the story of Elijah, but this is the central one. He was taken up into heaven without dying, and his mantle fell upon his servant Elisha. Then a series of miracles followed including such acts as these ;—healing the water of a salt or poisonous spring, so that the ground watered by it should not remain barren ; supplying the armies of Israel and Judah with water, when they were distressed for want of it ; multiplying a widow's oil, so as to give her the means of satisfying the creditor who was exacting what was due to him ; healing a nobleman from another country who was a leper, and refusing to take any reward for doing so ; revealing to the king of Israel the secret counsels of the king of Syria, with whom he was at war. Also each of these prophets, Elijah and Elisha, raised a boy from death, so as to comfort the anguished heart of the child's mother.

The third great occasion for miracles was during the captivity in Babylon. King Nebuchadnezzar required all the officers of his kingdom, except those of highest degree, to worship a golden image. Now idolatry was the chief sin for which the punishment of this captivity had been sent upon Israel. Three young Israelites were among the officers included in the king's decree ; they refused to bow down before the image, and so incurred the penalty for disobedience, which was that they should be thrown into a furnace. They were thrown in ; and this is what followed :—

Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his

counsellors, did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, came forth of the midst of the fire. And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was a hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.*

The king then made a new decree supporting them in their worship of the true God.

Another miracle which had its place in recalling the people from their long continued sin of idolatry was the deliverance accorded to Daniel. Darius the Mede made a decree that no one should offer any petition to god or man, except to himself, for thirty days. The decree was at the instance of Daniel's enemies, who knew he would not desist from praying to God; and the penalty was that the offender should be thrown into a den of lions. Three times a day Daniel used to kneel

* Dan. III, 24—27.

in prayer to God, and after the decree was signed he continued to pray, just as he had done before ; for this he was cast into the den, much to the king's sorrow, for he loved his faithful servant Daniel, and had no ill will towards him : but the next morning, to the king's amazement and delight, Daniel was found still unhurt. This is the conclusion of the story:—

The king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel ; and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions ?

Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me ; forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me ; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.

Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God. And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives ; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake

all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.*

This king, like Nebuchadnezzar, issued another decree, recalling his previous one, and supporting the worship which had so signally been proved to be right.

These were the two chief miracles of the Captivity period ; and that Captivity, with its signal proofs that Jehovah only is God, has fully accomplished its purpose, for from that time to this, the Jews have never again fallen into their old sin of national idolatry.

The fourth and last period of Bible miracles is the greatest of them all. It is the earthly life of Jesus Christ himself, and its immediate sequel in the establishment of his Church by his Apostles. All that we read in the Old Testament was a preparation for this. All God's dealings with his people before Christ came were leading onwards towards this great manifestation ; all his dealings with them since have been carrying out the scheme of redemption then manifested. The birth of Jesus was a miracle ; and it was miraculously made known to a group of shepherds, and to a group of Parsees. The shepherds were in the fields near Bethlehem, the town where Jesus was born ; and the announcement was made to them by angels, who appeared in glory to them, and spoke to them in audible words, telling them that the Saviour was born.

* Dan. VI, 19—24.

The Parsees were apprised of the fact in an eastern country, perhaps Persia, where they saw a star which they recognised as peculiarly connected with the King of the Jews ; they came, and found him in his mother's arms and worshipped him. When Jesus was grown to man's estate he wrought miracles freely, to arrest the attention of the people as he preached the Gospel to them, and to show them that his object was only to do them good. These miracles are termed in the New Testament "wonders", because they were more than the people could understand ; and "signs", because they evidenced his goodness ; and "mighty works", because only divine power could perform them. Again and again Jesus cured all the sick persons who were brought to him from whatever diseases they were suffering, and a few cases are selected as samples which are recorded for us with fuller details. Three times he raised a dead person to life ; and on the last occasion of the three, just before he wrought the miracle, he uttered aloud a short prayer in which he permitted us to hear what his purpose was. The words of that prayer are these ;—

Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.
And I knew that thou hearest me always : but
because of the people which stand by I said it, that
they may believe that thou hast sent me.*

The Gospel of S. John, in which this prayer is recorded with the miracle that followed, contains a much smaller selection of miracles, than any one of the other

* John XI, 41, 42.

Gospels, up to the time of Jesus Christ's death ; and in one of the last chapters we have this statement about the reason for such a record :—

Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book : but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

It would take too long to give you details of all Jesus Christ's recorded miracles ; but I will tell you briefly of these few which S. John has selected, and point out how they subserve the aim he had in view.

The first was turning water into wine at a marriage feast, because when Jesus himself and five disciples had joined the company unexpectedly the wine ran short. In doing this he showed that he could dispense with the ordinary processes of nature, by which water is gradually turned into wine, for that they are wholly under his control.

The second was curing a child of fever, when the father came and begged him to do so. The father thought he could effect the cure only if he came where the sick child was : but Jesus did it by his mere word, without coming any nearer the house, and at the time he was at a distance of about 25 miles from it.

The third miracle was enabling a cripple to walk ; and this he did on the Sabbath day, to show that he was loosening those who trusted in him from the

* John XX, 30, 31.

bonds of the old law, as well as from physical disabilities.

The fourth miracle was feeding about five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes ; thus demonstrating that all supply for our needs is in his hands to bestow. When all had been fed, there was more bread left than there had been at first.

The fifth was a miracle of guidance ; his disciples were in a ship, unable to make headway because of the contrary breeze ; while they were still over two miles from shore, Jesus came to them walking on the sea ; he went up into the ship to them, and immediately they were at the land.

The sixth was giving sight to a man born blind and this time he was pleased to use means of such a kind as to show, that while appliances become necessary when he commands them, they have no virtue in themselves. The means he used were that he covered the man's eyes with clay, and directed him to go and wash in a particular pool which he named.

The seventh miracle was the raising of the dead man.

Taking these miracles as a representative group, we can see that they bid us put our trust in Jesus Christ, as —

- (1) the lord of nature in all its workings ;
- (2) the master of disease, and therefore also of health ;
- (3) the loosener of bonds, both physical and spiritual ;
- (4) the giver of supply beyond our utmost need ;

- (5) the controller of our course through life ;
- (6) the enlightener of our darkness ; and
- (7) the quickener of the dead.

But more than all these is the resurrection of Jesus Christ himself from the dead. This is the one miracle which not only evidences the presence in him of a power more than human, but also becomes itself the evidence of the truth of the others ; this one, so to speak, carries the others in its train ; for it is vain for objectors to question any of those slighter manifestations of Almighty power when this remains undisputed ; and undisputed it is, if empty cavils are disregarded. It has been called "the best proved fact in history" ; and it may well be so called ; for if it were not true, the history of the foremost and most progressive nations would be a contradiction and an enigma ; they would have moved the world without a fulcrum, they would have risen to an eminence without a foundation to rest upon.

Before Jesus Christ left the world, he promised his disciples that there should be miracles wrought by them ; and so there were, many miracles : but they had no ability of themselves to do any wonderful work, and they constantly declared that they were not showing forth their own power or goodness ; their miracles were done "in the name of Jesus Christ". The miracles thus wrought by the disciples were inclusive of one significant wonder which had not been performed, because not required, during the lifetime of the Master, *viz.* speaking in strange languages. This was appro-

priate when the apostles had received their commission to go into all lands, and preach to all peoples. In other respects the miracles of the disciples were similar in character to those of Jesus Christ, and this feature is specially noticeable as common to both groups,—that they were never wrought to gain deliverance for the doer of them from persecution or trouble : their purpose was to evidence the character of the Gospel, its beneficence and holiness, and to demonstrate that it came from God. The Apostle who wrote in one Epistle,

‘Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. *

wrote also in the same Epistle,

Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one ; thrice was I beaten with rods ; once was I stoned ; thrice I suffered shipwreck ; a night and a day I have been in the deep ; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren ; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. †

On review of the Biblical miracles as a whole the purpose of them appears clear and consistent: it is evidential: and when the occasion on which the evidence

* 2 Cor. XII, 12. † 2 Cor. XI, 24—27.

was needed passed away, they ceased. Thus the first great group belongs to the time when the religious polity of the Jews was being established in the world: it was a great revolution, and the leaders of it, Moses and Joshua, needed to show that their commission was from on high. It was however temporary, and merged in what was larger and truer when Jesus Christ came into the world; and so the group of Christian miracles is larger and more significant than the early Jewish. The intermediate groups were much more limited in their scope; the one connected with the Israelitish monarchy was to authenticate the message of those prophets who sought to preserve the true religion from being lost in idolatry; and the one connected with the captivity was to evidence the presence of divine power in support of truth, when earthly power would have crushed it out of existence. All four groups unite their evidence in favor of Christianity, which is the culmination of Judaism; and Christianity culminates in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. When that is assured to us we have full confidence in his word, as the word of one who cannot be mistaken and cannot deceive. His word is truth. And having confidence in that word, we know that his death was the atonement for our sins, and his rising to life again is the earnest and commencement of our rising with him to eternal glory.

LECTURE XI.

THE PROPHECIES

OF THE

AVESTA AND THE BIBLE.

It is in connection with Prophecy that the Antiquity of the two books we are comparing becomes of some importance : not indeed if the events prophesied are still future ; in that case it will affect our estimate of the prophetical book very little, whether it was written two thousand or ten thousand years ago : to look forward with certainty two thousand years needs divine prescience just as surely as to look forward five times as far ; but so long as we are still awaiting the fulfilment, we cannot assign to the prophecy any evidential value ; for it becomes evidence only when fulfilment has demonstrated its truth. Events now past, that were future when the prophecy was uttered, are a crucial test ; it is these that supply a criterion as to whether the author of the prophetic writing was or was not inspired of God. And to decide whether any past event occurred subsequently

to the writing of the prophecy, or previously, we must know at least approximately the date of the writing. The Antiquity of these books was the subject of my first lecture, and I showed you that there is sufficient ground for holding that the Bible was written at various dates from about 1500 B. C. to about 100 A. D. though in part compiled from earlier documents; and that the Avesta was also written at intervals through some centuries, the earliest portion dating from a period perhaps as late as the 6th century B. C. perhaps a good deal earlier.

Now laying aside for the present any consideration of those prophecies which regard events connected with the next world, the close of this dispensation and the introduction of a new one, there is but one single prophecy to be found in the whole of the Avesta; and the uncertainty of the date of the book is immaterial in respect of this one prophecy, for it was uttered in the reign of Yima, and the fulfilment came in the same reign; and no estimate of the early date of the book carries us back as far as Yima. The same narrator presents us with an account of both prophecy and fulfilment, though indeed the fulfilment is rather implied than expressed, for it goes no further than to say that Yima obeyed the instructions he received and prepared for the coming deluge.

The prophecy runs thus :—

Then spake Ahura Mazda to Yima : Yima the fair,
Son of Vivanhao, upon the corporeal world will the

evil of winter come; wherefore a vehement destroying frost will arise. Upon the corporeal world will the evil of winter come; wherefore snow will fall in great abundance, on the summits of the mountains, on the breadth of the heights. From three places, O Yima, let the cattle depart, if they are in the most fearful places, if they are on the tops of the mountains, if they are in the depths of the valleys, to secure dwelling places. Before this winter the country produced pasture; before flow waters, behind is the melting of the snow. Clouds, O Yima, will come over the inhabited regions, which now behold the feet of the greater and smaller cattle. Therefore make thou a circle of the length of a race-ground to all four corners. Thither bring thou the seed of the cattle, of the beasts of burden, and of men, of dogs, of birds, and of the red burning fires : therefore make thou this circle the length of a race-ground to all four corners as a dwelling place for mankind ; of the length of a race-course to all four corners for the cows giving milk. There collect the water to the length of a Hatra; there let the birds dwell; in the everlasting golden hued region, whose food never fails. There make thou dwelling places, floors, pillars, court-yards, and enclosures.

Then he was told what he was to bring within the enclosure, and the passage proceeds thus :—

At the upper part of the region make nine bridges ; six in the middle, three at the bottom. To the

first bridges bring the seed of a thousand men and women, to the middle the seed of six hundred, to the lowest of three hundred. Hither bring those who are in the enclosure with the golden lance. Round about this enclosure make a lofty wall and a window that gives light within.

Then thought Yima : How shall I make an enclosure as Ahura Mazda has said ?

Then said Ahura Mazda to Yima : Yima, Beautiful, Son of Vivanhao, tread on this earth with the heels, strike it with the hands, so as to cause the man-inhabited earth to cleave asunder.*

Then follows Yima's performance of what was commanded him given in full detail.

In turning to look at the prophecies in the Bible, it is interesting to find that Moses, the earliest writer, has given us a narrative which is in some features very similar to this story of Yima ; the hero of it is Noah ; and the narrative (shortened) is as follows :—

God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt ; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, 'The end of all flesh is come before me ; for the earth is filled with violence through them ; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark of gopher wood ; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. And this is the fashion which thou

* Vendidad II.

shalt make it of : the length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above ; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof ; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it. And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven ; and every thing that is in the earth shall die. But with thee will I establish my covenant ; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee. And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee ; they shall be male and female. Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after its kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive. And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee ; and it shall be for food for thee and for them.

Thus did Noah ; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.

In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were

opened, and the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights. And the waters increased and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth. And all the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth. And the waters prevailed upon the earth a hundred and fifty days. And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark, and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged : the fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained ; and the waters returned from off the earth continually : and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated. And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat. And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month ; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen. And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth ; and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry. And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried.

And God spake unto Noah saying, Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee. Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee of all flesh.*

The two narratives are similar in these particulars.—Each of the patriarchs, Yima and Noah, was warned of God that a flood should soon come upon the earth; each was instructed to make preparations beforehand; the preparation in each case was to be an enclosure for protection; and in each case the enclosure was to be stocked with men and animals; also each of the two men obeyed the instructions given him. Among the differences between the two accounts we may notice, that a larger number of men were saved in the Avesta form of the story, the enclosure which saved them being also much larger; that this enclosure was not a vessel to float, but a fence, apparently of clay, standing on the ground; the flood was not of water but of snow, and it is not clear how the fence could keep out the snow. Another noticeable point is that no reason is given for such a visitation being sent at all; Ahura Mazda simply announces that it is coming: whereas in the Bible the godless state into which the world had fallen is described, and then that is assigned as the reason for the flood. It is interesting to observe also that modern investigation has corroborated the Biblical record of a flood of waters; but as that touches the truth of the main narrative rather than the accuracy of the

* Gen VI, 12—22, VII, 11, 12, 17, 19, 21, VIII, 1—5, 13—17.

prophecy that preceded it, I leave further remarks on the subject for another lecture.

I have dwelt at some length upon this prophecy of the flood, not because it is of a very striking character; there are several others much more momentous; but because it is the only one which supplies material for comparing the Avesta directly with the Bible. There are many other prophecies in the Bible; and those I will now pass very briefly in review, taking them in four groups, according to the books in which they are written.

(A) The Historical books contain some announcements of events to happen within a few days or even hours of the giving of the prediction; some, of events to happen shortly but not quite so immediately; and some of what should happen after such an interval that the author of the book could not add any statement of the fulfilment. Of the first kind, events to happen almost immediately, are—

the restoration of Pharaoh's butler to his office, and the execution of his baker, within three days;* the death of Abijah, son of king Jeroboam, as his mother entered the house on her return from enquiring of the prophet about him;†

the supply of cheap and abundant food, in relief of the famine in Samaria, which the king's lord-in-waiting should see but not partake of.‡

* Gen. XL, 13, 19, 20—22. † 1 Kin. XIV, 12, 17. ‡ 2 Kin. VII, 1, 2, 16—20.

Some of the events that fulfilled prophecy, but not quite so immediately, are—

the birth of Isaac;*

the seven years of plenty in Egypt, followed by seven years of famine;†

the forty years wandering of the Israelites in the wilderness, and the death, in that interval, of all the men of war except two;‡

the successful issue of Barak's battle against the Canaanites,¶ and of many other battles;

the accession to the throne of Saul,§ of David,|| of Jeroboam,\$ and others;

the continuance of the throne in the family of Jehu for four generations; **

the victory of Joash over the Syrians three times and no more; ††

the continuance of Hezekiah's life for fifteen years after his sickness.‡‡ The fulfilment of this prophecy to Hezekiah is not in terms recorded, but it appears from this;—that it was in the fourteenth year of his reign that he received the prophecy, and he reigned in all twenty nine years.¶¶

Among the announcements of events to happen after a long interval are these;—

* Gen. XVIII. 10; XXI. † Gen. XLI. 29, 30, 47, 54. ‡ Num. XIV, 29—34, and XXVI, 63—65. ¶ Jud. IV, 6—9, 15—24. § 1 Sam. IX, 15—17, and XI, 15. || 1 Sam. XVI, 1—13, 2 Sam. II, 4, and V, 3. \$ 1 Kin. XI, 29—37, and XII, 20. ** 2 Kin. X, 30, and XV, 8—12. †† 2 Kin. XIII, 19, 25. ‡‡ 2 Kin. XX, 6. ¶¶ 2 Kin. XVIII, 2, and 13.

the promise of a saviour of mankind, who should undo the work of the devil in bringing sin into the world ; *

the promise of the land of Canaan to the family of Abraham as their inheritance ; †

the promise to Abraham that he should be the father of many nations ; ‡

the declaration that Edom should serve Israel, but should subsequently throw off the yoke ;

the distinctive blessings pronounced upon the several sons of Jacob, by Jacob himself, §

and again by Moses ; §

the yet more clearly distinctive blessings pronounced by Jacob on his two grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh ; ||

the overthrow of Moab and other nations by Israel ; **

the captivity and dispersion of Israel because of their unfaithfulness to God ; ††

the rooting up of Israel out of their land, and their scattering "beyond the river", *i. e.* the Euphrates. ‡‡

(B) The Poetical books contain fewer prophecies than the Historical, but some of them are very detailed and precise : they are mainly concerned with Jesus Christ, and point to both his first coming and his

* Gen. III, 15; comp. 1 John III, 8. † Gen. XII, 7; comp. Josh. XXI, 43—45. ‡ Gen. XVII, 4. ¶ Gen. XXVII, 40; comp. 2 Kin. VII, 20. § Gen. XLIX. § Deut, XXXIII. || Gen. XLVIII. ** Num. XXIV, †† Deut. XXVIII. 62—65. ‡‡ 1 Kin. XIV, 15.

second ; sometimes in general terms, sometimes giving minute particulars. These are some of the leading prophecies of his first coming.—

Why do the heathen rage ?

And the people imagine a vain thing ?

The kings of the earth set themselves,

And the rulers take counsel together,

Against the LORD, and against his Anointed ;—

Let us break their bonds asunder,

And cast away their cords from us.

He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh ;

The LORD shall have them in derision.

Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath,

And vex them in his sore displeasure:

Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion*.

This describes in poetical language the attempt of the worldly powers, Jewish and Roman, to destroy Jesus Christ, and their utter failure.†

The next passage I will read you is from a Psalm which Jesus Christ himself quoted, when he was on the cross.

All they that see me laugh me to scorn ;

They shoot out the lip, they shake the head ;

He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him ;

Let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.

...

They gaped upon me with their mouths,

As a ravening and a roaring lion.

* Ps. II, 1—6. † See Acts IV, 24—29.

I am poured out like water, and all my bones
are out of joint;

My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst
of my bowels.

My strength is dried up like a potsherd;

And my tongue cleaveth to my jaws;

And thou hast brought me into the dust of death.

For dogs have compassed me;

The assembly of the wicked have enclosed me;

They pierced my hands and my feet.

I may tell all my bones:

They look and stare upon me.

They part my garments among them,

And cast lots upon my vesture.*

Here we have a prophecy of Christ's crucifixion, with the very words that the priests used as they watched him,† and the way in which the soldiers who had crucified him shared his clothing.‡

This next passage speaks of Christ's experience of shame and reproach, his own brothers being among those that reproached him.

For thy sake I have borne reproach;

Shame hath covered my face.

I am become a stranger unto my brethren,

And an alien unto my mother's children.

For the zeal of thy house hath eaten me up;

And the reproaches of them that reproached
thee are fallen upon me.¶

* Ps. XXII, 7, 8, 13—18
‡ Id. 35. ¶ Ps. LIX, 7—9.

† See Matt. XXVII, 41—43.

Let me read you one more verse of a Psalm ; it prophesies the ascension of Christ into heaven, when his atoning work was done, and the successful issue of that work in his sending the Holy Spirit of God to dwell with men.

Thou hast ascended on high ;

Thou hast led captivity captive ;

Thou hast received gifts for men ;

Yea, for the rebellious also ;

That the LORD God might dwell among them.*

(C) The books of the 16 prophets are too full and various to be even glanced at in a single lecture ; suffice it that they deal with many persons and things, ranging from the prophet's own day to the present time and beyond, and that with much fulness and variety. I will take but a single example from each of 8 out of the 16.

Isaiah prophesied that Babylon should be reduced to desolation for ever ; †

Hosea, that the children of Israel should abide many days without any national government or any power of carrying on their national religion ; ‡

Amos, that there should be a great spread of true religion, the religion that should go forth from the Jews, among the nations of the world ; ¶

Micah, that Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, should be the birthplace of Christ ; §

* Ps. LXVIII, 18. † Is. XIII, 20. ‡ Hos. III, 4. ¶ Amos IX, 11, 12. § Mic. V, 23.

Jeremiah, that the Israelites, after being carried captive to Babylon, should be restored in seventy years' time ; *

Ezekiel, that Egypt should be a base kingdom, ruling no more over the nations ; †

Haggai, that the glory of the temple which Zerubbabel was building should exceed that of the far grander temple of Solomon because Jesus Christ should come to it ; ‡

Zechariah prophesied that the great king should come to Jerusalem, "lowly and riding upon an ass." ¶

But there was one prophet who, more than all the rest prophesied of events that belong to our own day : I will pause a little longer over his writings. His name is Daniel ; I have spoken of him in previous Lectures. He was one of the chief ministers of state, not in his own land, nor under a Jewish king, but under the king of Babylon ; and he was inspired both to interpret dreams that were sent to the king, and to write other prophecies as well. A brief enumeration of these will be in point.

The first prophecy was the interpretation of a dream that king Nebuchadnezzar had dreamt, and had forgotten : § that Daniel could tell him what the dream was, certified the king that he could interpret it rightly. The dream was of an image in human form, with head of gold, breast of silver, thighs of brass, and legs of

* Jer. XXIX. 10. † Ez. XXIX, 15. ‡ Hag. II. 7, 9. ¶ Zech. IX, 9. § Dan. II.

iron, the feet being iron mixed with clay. And the meaning was that the Babylonian kingdom, which was golden, should be succeeded by another kingdom inferior to it, of silver, and that by a third, of brass, and lastly there should be a stronger and more violent kingdom, united for a while, and then losing its unity by sub-division into sections, partly strong, partly broken. In the dream also a stone cut out without hands smote the image on its feet, and became a great mountain, and filled the earth : the meaning is thus given : "And in the days of these kingdoms shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed ; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." *

The next vision, and its interpretation, belonged to Nebuchadnezzar's own life ; he was to be driven out, afflicted with what we now call Lycomania, and should be restored to his kingdom after seven years.†

The next interpretation is not of a dream, but of words written by a hand that appeared against the palace wall, while king Belshazzar was feasting in impious style. Daniel interpreted the words as being a denunciation upon the king ; and he met with his death accordingly that very night.‡

During the reign of this Belshazzar Daniel himself had two visions : the first one was to a great extent

* Ver. 44. † Chap. IV. ‡ Chap. V.

parallel with the prophecy of the golden headed image ; it announced four kingdoms or empires under the aspect of four beasts, a lion, a bear, a leopard with four heads, and a dreadful beast, not the counterpart of any known animal ; it had four horns, and among them a little horn came up, blasphemous, and domineering : the dominion of this little horn was destroyed, and the saints of the most High took the kingdom. This vision has been recognised as descriptive of the kingdoms of Christendom, among which one, very exactly answering to the little horn, has sprung up in Southern Europe, it has spoken blasphemy, and for a long time persecuted the saints ; its secular dominion has been taken away within the life time of the present generation, and we are now waiting for the fulfilment of what remains of the prophecy. *

The second vision which Daniel had during the reign of Belshazzar depicted the second and third of the great kingdoms, and gave a fuller description of them than before : the angel who expounded the meaning to him revealed that these two were the Persian and the Greek kingdoms. †

The next prophecy was communicated to Daniel by an angel in the first year of king Darius : it announced the coming of the Messiah, that is Jesus Christ, to die for our sins, and gave the date of his coming. It was in consequence of this prophecy that at the beginning of our era the Jews were actually expect-

* Chap. VII.

† Chap. VIII.

ing their Messiah, though when he came, they refused to acknowledge him.*

The last prophecy which Daniel has given us is long, and very detailed, but somewhat obscure. It begins with the time of Cyrus, who was then on the throne, and finishes with the resurrection of the dead, still future. †

So far as the period for the fulfilment of these numerous prophecies has been overtaken by the march of time, all has come to pass as was foretold ; no prophecy has been falsified by the event ; so that the assurance we have of the Old Testament being from God is in a high degree cumulative : and one of these prophets claims the fact of foretelling future events as an incontestable proof of divine inspiration, which he challenges the false prophets to produce in their own support.

Produce your cause, saith the LORD ; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring them forth, and show us what shall happen ; let them show the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them ; or declare us things for to come. Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods ; yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together. Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought : an abomination is he that chooseth you. ‡

* Chap. IX. † Chaps. XI. XII. ‡ Is. XLI, 21—24.

(D) Let us pass on to the New Testament.

In this the prophetic element is scarcely less conspicuous than in the Old Testament, though its main purpose is to record the events of that life in which the Old Testament found its fulfilment.

As already with the Historical books, we may distinguish between those prophecies which had their fulfilment within a short time of their being uttered, and those of which the fulfilment was not, and could not have been, recorded by the writer of the prophecy. The former group includes such as these :—

An angel appeared to an aged priest, Zachariah by name, and told him that his wife, who was also old, should have a son : this came to pass, though the old man doubted the angel's word, and the child was the forerunner and herald of Jesus Christ.

The same angel, a few months later, announced to a Jewish maiden, Mary by name, that she should become the mother of the long expected Christ. This came to pass, as the angel said.

Jesus Christ, in the course of his ministry, repeatedly foretold that he would die by crucifixion, which was wholly contrary to Jewish custom, and indeed impossible for Jews to inflict, so that his words implied that he would be handed over to the Romans for execution, though at the time there was no thought of any such step being taken.*

* John III, 14. Matt. XX, 19.

He added other details of the sufferings he was to undergo, and what he said was fulfilled to the letter.

He declared also that he would be buried, which was wholly contrary to Roman custom in the case of crucified criminals.* Nevertheless it came to pass even so, for the Roman governor allowed a rich Jew to take possession of the body, and he buried it.

He declared—and this is the prophecy of prophecies, the chief, central, most crucial prophecy of all that the Bible contains,—he declared that he would rise from the dead the third day.† I fearlessly defy contradiction, reasonable contradiction, when I say that in the fulfilment of this prophecy we have a foundation of rock firm enough to support the fabric of Christianity beyond the possibility of its being shaken, firm enough to ensure the salvation of every one who will put his heart's trust in the Saviour Jesus Christ. If a man can say, I will rise from the dead the third day after I am put to death, and can do it, that man is entitled to our absolute unreserved confidence. One, and one only, has done this: he is entitled to our perfect confidence: and if we thus believe in him, he will raise us to share his glory.

But though this is the chief of all the prophecies, there are still others to be noticed. Jesus Christ announced to his disciples the course of events after his own departure, and the experience that would be-

* Matt. XXVI, 12. † John II, 19-22. Matt. XVII, 22, 23; XX, 18, 19; XXVI, 31, 32.

fall them, as they went at his command to preach the Gospel among the nations. This is what he said:—

Many shall come in my name, saying I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars : see that ye be not troubled : for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you : and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations ; and then shall the end come.*

He told them also of the coming destruction of Jerusalem, and of the uprooting of the very stones of the temple, a thing which the Roman general Titus did his best to avoid, for he boasted that the splendors of that temple should remain as a trophy to himself.

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand

* Matt. XXIV, 5—14.

in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand;) then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains; let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house; neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter,* neither on the sabbath day; for then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.* There shall not be left here (*i. e.* in the buildings of the temple,) one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.†

If any of you have studied the history of the war which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, you will understand how full and exact was the prophecy thus uttered; but it would detain you too long if I was to give you that chapter of Roman history now.

It remains to glance at those prophecies the fulfilment of which passed beyond the period of the sacred writers, so that it is not recorded in the New Testament.

Some of these stand briefly, but very inclusively in the parables that Jesus Christ spoke: as when he described the different ways in which the preaching of the Gospel would be received; ‡ or when he compared the

members of his Church to a mixture of wheat and tares in a corn field, * and to good and bad fish caught in the same net. † Some of his parables dwell with more detail upon the spread of Christianity in the world, showing that it would be rejected by the Jews and accepted by Gentiles ; ‡ yet not so fully accepted as that faithfulness would pervade the world at large before his return. ¶ That there should come impostors, and Anti-Christ, and that many professing believers should be utterly unprepared for his coming, is prophesied in the same chapter from which I have already read you some verses.

There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders ; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert ; go not forth : Behold, he is in the secret chambers ; believe it not....As in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away ;—so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. §

In the Epistles we find two special phases of the development of Christianity made the subject of pro-

* Matt. XIII, 24—30, 36—39. † Id. 47—49. ‡ Luke XIV, 16—24. Matt. XXI, 33—43. ¶ Luke XVIII, 8. § Matt. XXIV, 24—26, 38, 39.

phesy. One of these is the relative position of Christians and Jews, which is described as passing through various changes: first Jews are cast off, and the Gentiles admitted, then the Gentiles are warned against boasting over the Jews, and afterwards mercy is represented as reaching the Jews through the mercy that is the kindness in feeling and action, of the Gentiles towards them.

Have they (the Jews) stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy....And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches....For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in....For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief, even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. *

The other great event which was foretold in Scripture, and has now become one of the leading instances of fulfilled prophecy, is the Apostasy from the Christian

* Rom. XI, 11, 17, 18, 23, 30, 31.

Faith. This is spoken of by S. Paul in 2 Thess. II, and in 1 Tim. IV, and by S. John in the Revelation.

Writing to the Thessalonians, S. Paul cautioned them against impatience in anticipating the second coming of Jesus Christ, and warned them that this Apostasy, or Falling away, must take place first ; and he described it briefly thus:—

That day shall not come, except there come a falling away first and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped ; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.... Then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming ; even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.*

Writing to Timothy, the Apostle added this further description:—

The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils ; speaking lies in hypocrisy ; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.†

* 2 Thess. II, 3, 4, 8–10.

† 1 Tim. IV, 1, 2.

It would exceed my limits if I was to point out the fulfilment of these prophecies in every detail, and I will content myself with the following extracts from Bishop Wordsworth's Commentary on the New Testament. The extracts are incomplete, but they will suffice, as samples, to show you how unmistakeably the word of prophecy has been verified by the event.

The Bishop's note on the above passage in 2 Thess. contains these words:—

This prediction (opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God &c.) is signally fulfilled by the first public official act which is performed by every Pope in succession, on his elevation to the Papacy, and by which he takes possession of his place as such. Every Pope on his election is carried into the principal Church at Rome, his Cathedral, S. Peter's; he is there lifted up by the Cardinals, and is placed on the High Altar. When there placed, and sitting in the Church of God, on the altar of God, he is adored by them, kneeling before him, and kissing his feet. The word by which this act is described by the Church of Rome herself is no other than "the Adoration." And the words on the papal coin are, "*quem creant adorant.*"

And his note on 1 Tim. IV, 2 has this paragraph:—

It is unhappily too notorious that a large portion of the Western Church has fulfilled this prophecy by its own practice, in giving sanction to mendaci-

ous legends and to "lying wonders;" and it has even made, and is making, a traffic of fabulous miracles; and has thus fallen away from the profession of a sound faith in the "Mystery of Godliness," which abhors what is false, especially in religion; and has initiated itself and others in the "Mystery of Iniquity," which receives not "the love of the truth," and is given over to "strong delusions," and to "believe a lie."

S. John's prophecy in the Revelation is historically much fuller; and Bishop Wordsworth, after going carefully through the whole prophecy, gives us a retrospect of Chapters XI to XVIII, in which he enumerates several of the particulars that have been fulfilled. The enumeration is certainly remarkable, though it is by no means as inclusive as it might be made. I select from it this passage.—

The Holy Spirit, who foresees all things, and is the ever-blessed Teacher, Guide, and Comforter of the Church, was graciously pleased to provide a heavenly antidote for dangerous, wide spread, and long-enduring evils, by dictating the Apocalypse to S. John. He foresaw that the Church of Rome would fall away from the truth, and would adulterate it by many "gross and grievous abominations" (to use the words of Hooker), and that she would anathematize all who would not communicate with her, and denounce them as cut off from the body of Christ, and from hope of everlasting salvation. The Holy Spirit foresaw, that she would exercise a

wide and dominant sway for many generations, by boldly iterated assertions of Unity, Antiquity, Sanctity, and Universality. He foresaw also, that these pretensions would be supported by the civil sword of many Governments, among which the Roman Empire would be divided at its dissolution ; and that Rome would thus be enabled to display herself to the world in an august attitude of Imperial power, and with the dazzling splendor of temporal felicity. He foresaw also, that the Church of Rome would captivate the Imaginations of men by the fascinations of Art allied with Religion; and would ravish their sense, and rivet their admiration, by gaudy colors, and stately pomp, and prodigal magnificence. He foresaw, that she would beguile their credulity by Miracles and Mysteries, Apparitions and Dreams, Trances and Ecstasies, and would appeal to such evidence in support of her strange doctrines. He foresaw, likewise, that she would enslave men, and much more women, by practising on their affections, and by accommodating herself, with dexterous pliancy, to their weaknesses, relieving them from the burden of thought, and from the perplexity of doubt, by proffering to them the aid of Infallibility ; soothing the sorrows of the mourner by dispensing pardon and promising peace to the departed; removing the load of guilt from the oppressed conscience by the ministries of the Confessional, and by nicely poised compensations for sin; and that she would flourish

for many centuries in proud and prosperous impunity, before her "sins would cleave to heaven, and come in remembrance before God".* He foresaw, that many generations of men would thus be tempted to fall from the faith, and become victims of error; and that they who clung to the truth would be exposed to cozening flatteries, and fierce assaults, and savage tortures from her.

He foresaw these things, and wrote the Apocalypse. In this Divine Book, the Spirit of God has portrayed the Church of Rome, such as none but He could have foreseen she would become, and such as, alas! she has become. He has thus broken her magic spell; He has taken the wand of enchantment from her hand; He has lifted the mask from her face; and with His Divine Hand He has written her true character in large letters, and has planted her title on her forehead, to be seen and read by all,—**"MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH"**.†

Taking an inclusive view of these prophecies, considering the immense variety of them, their wide range, and the fulness of detail that we find in them, it is not too much to say, that if the claim of the Bible to be the word of God had to be tested exclusively by its prophecies, and if the prophetic element were but one per cent. of what it actually is in extent, that claim would be amply substantiated.

* Rev. XVI, 19; XVIII, 5. † Rev. XVII, 5.

LECTURE XII.

THE TEACHING

OF THE

AVESTA AND THE BIBLE

ON THE SUBJECT OF THE END OF THE WORLD.

This expression "The end of the world" takes a good deal for granted. It implies the expectation that things will not go on for ever as they are going now, but that there lies before us a wide reaching change in the economy of human affairs, in the system by which God is at present dealing with mankind; and it implies moreover that the change will not be by gradual development: gradual development has made our lives very different from those of our ancestors five hundred, or even one hundred, years ago; invention, and education, and increased facilities for communication, have caused many changes, and may cause many more: but these are not the end of the world. The phrase occurs in the English version of the Avesta, and also in that of the Bible. In the latter the Greek equivalent for

this phrase does not mean a kosmical catastrophe which will put an end to the material existence of this globe of ours, as a unit among the planets of the solar system; it indicates rather the winding up of this age, or dispensation, and according to the teaching of the Bible some changes, less drastic than the one we are expecting, but still of the same character, have already passed upon mankind since human history began. The original condition of men, as they increased from a single family to a multitude of families, was devoid of national or racial distinctions; and the age or dispensation through which this was the case continued until the flood; we sometimes speak of it as the Antediluvian age. After the flood a new beginning was made, and a new system was introduced, which continues till now, except as regards those people who have received further revelation from God. With regard to such people, the dispensation following upon the flood has been called the Patriarchal dispensation; in the course of it God made himself known to Abraham and other patriarchs; they worshipped him in great simplicity, having no further ritual beyond sacrifices offered by the head of each family. A new dispensation was introduced when the law was given through Moses, and God's people were placed under an organised system, in prospect of their occupation of Palestine, with settled homes and landed property. This Mosaic polity was much interfered with by the Babylonian captivity, but it was not abolished until Christ came, and the Romans destroyed the temple at Jerusalem. Then the Mosaic

dispensation was wound up, and the Christian dispensation was introduced, under which we now live. One marked peculiarity of this dispensation is that Christians are commanded to preach the Gospel of Christ, and to spread his religion, through all nations. This Christian dispensation is only to last for a limited time, and then it, like the previous ones, will be wound up, and a new one will be introduced. Thus the events indicated by the phrase "the end of the world," or "the winding up of this dispensation," occupy a very important place in unfulfilled prophecy : some of the prophecies I quoted to you in my last Lecture reach forward to these events, but the events themselves are important enough to claim further attention from us.

According to the Avesta we cannot recognise any such winding up of past dispensations. The flood in the time of Yima is mentioned only in the second Fargard of the Vendidad ; it formed no special crisis in the history of Mazdayasnians, and has no influence of any kind upon the rest of their Scriptures. Nevertheless the Avesta agrees with the Bible in declaring that the present state of things will give way to another; the present dispensation will be wound up. My purpose now is to give you a comparative statement of what the two books tell us on this subject. The passages in the Avesta which bear upon the subject are the following.—

In the Gatha Ustvaiti we have these words ;

For the Ho'y one held I thee, Mazda Ahura,
When I first saw thee at the origin of the world ;

As thou effectest that deeds and prayers find their reward ;

Evil for the evil, good blessings for the good,
At the last dissolution of the creation through thy virtue.

At this dissolution there will come to thy kingdom,
O holy, heavenly Mazda, through good-mindedness,

He through whose deeds the world increases in purity.*

The meaning of this passage is rather obscure, but it declares clearly enough that there will be a dissolution of the creation ; and it also implies that the dissolution will be accompanied with a judgment ; those who in this world have performed good deeds will then obtain good blessings ; those who have done evil will be requited with evil

Another very similar passage occurs in the Gatha Khshathra.—

After all this asks, to support the Cow, from Asha,
The active, the pure, with deeds, the wise with prayers,

Who is mighty and holy, and announces to the created the right guide,

Who gives better than the good, who grants to him according to wish,

To Ahura Mazda the kingdom, but him who arises from the bad as holy,

Does not requite until the final dissolution of the world. *

This does not appear to add much to what we had in the former passage : it tells us in rather involved style that there will be a requital to some persons, not very easy to distinguish, at the dissolution of the world.

In another we find the biblical phrase, "the end of the world", but it adds nothing to the above in the way of explanation, or fulness of statement.

Now will I say to you what as the first in the world
The wise Ahura Mazda has said to me ;

"He among you who will not act according to
this Manthra,

Namely, according to the spirit as well as the word,
To him will the end of the world turn to downfall".†

In a later Yasna there is a very important addition made to the expectation thus held out : it is the one addressed to fire ; and in it we are told that at some time or other there will be a "perfect resurrection" : the only indication of when this will take place is that it will be after "the long time" ; and even so the resurrection is only mentioned incidentally ; but it must be linked with the end of the world, for if we knew nothing else about it, the bare fact of resurrection itself would constitute a new era, and the commencement of a new dispensation. The words are these :—

* Yasna L. † Yasna XLIV.

Mayest thou burn in this dwelling, ever mayest thou burn in this dwelling, mayest thou be in brightness in this dwelling, mayest thou be in increase in this dwelling; throughout the long time, until the perfect resurrection, the perfect good resurrection included. *

Another important addition is given in the Khordah Avesta where we are told that there is a prospect of immortality being hereafter the portion of the living.—

Ahura Mazda created the creatures very good, very fair, very high, very furthering, very lofty: that they might make the world progressive, not growing old, not dying, not becoming corrupt and stinking, but ever living, ever profiting, a kingdom as one wishes it; that the dead may arise, and there may come immortality for the living, which furthers the world at will....

They it is (the Ames'ha Spentas,) who further the world at will so that it does not grow old and die, does not become corrupt and stinking, but ever living, ever profiting, a kingdom as one wishes it, that the dead may arise, and immortality for the living may come, which gives according to wish furtherance for the world. †

According to this Yasht the world is not to grow old and die; the Gathas say it is to be dissolved. The inconsistency, or apparent inconsistency, between these two might perhaps be explained if we had a fuller

* Yasna LXI. † Zamyad Yasht.

statement ; for both these are extremely brief : unfortunately the fuller statement is not forthcoming.

The Patet Erani, in the same casual sort of way, introduces yet further thoughts ; viz. that the risen body will in some way be different from the body we now have ; and that Paradise will continue, Hell will eventually be annihilated, and Ahriman and the Devs will perish.—

I am wholly without doubt in the existence of the good Mazdayasnian faith, in the coming of the resurrection and the later body, in the stepping over the bridge Chinvat, in an invariable recompense of good deeds and their reward, and of bad deeds and their punishment, as well as in the continuance of Paradise, in the annihilation of Hell and Ahriman and the Devs, that the God Ormazd will at last be victorious and Ahriman will perish, together with the Devs and the off shoots of darkness.

The Chinvat bridge is frequently mentioned, but it hardly comes within my present range of subject, because it is alleged to be reached by each individual on the fourth day after death, and so is not specially connected with the end of the world.

Besides these six passages I have not found any thing in the Avesta which throws light upon the momentous change which its believers are invited to expect.

The Bible connects the future life with the original state of man on the earth, as though all the interval, all the events of human history, were but a parenthesis. Man was created in the image of God, but that image

was marred; it will be perfectly restored, and then men will begin to live the true life, life as it ought to be, life free from pain and sorrow and sin and death. Meantime life as it is now, and has been since sin first threw its dark shadow over our race, is but one paragraph, a short sad paragraph, in the exquisite and endless record of God's dealings with his human children. This is shown by the way in which the glories of the garden of Eden, lost when our first parents sinned, are depicted as restored again at the last. At the very beginning of the Bible we have the narrative of the original garden, and at the very end we have its restoration. Milton embodied this thought in his great poem, by calling the first part of it *Paradise Lost*, and the second part *Paradise Regained*.

The words of the primeval promise, which looks forward to the ultimate restoration, are these;—

I will put enmity between thee (the serpent) and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

And the prospect of joy and beauty, which is set before us as the fulfilment of this promise, when our great enemy is vanquished and his works destroyed, we read in the last two chapters of the Bible. The description begins thus :—

I saw a new heaven and a new earth ; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away ; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the

* Gen. III, 15.

holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain ; for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. *

Many passages teach us that the future dispensation will be an improvement upon this one, an improvement so great that words can but feebly express it. Thus among the annual feasts of the Jews, the last and greatest was the one which typified the joy of the next world, and its special characteristic was its joyfulness. A common saying among the Jews was, If you have not been at that feast, you do not know what joy is. Here is the enactment in the law concerning it :—

Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine : and thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates. Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the LORD

thy God in the place which the LORD shall choose: because the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the works of thy hands ; therefore thou shalt surely rejoice.*

And as if it were not enough to have a grand annual type of the good things to come, there was a further commemoration ordered every seventh year when the land had a sabbath of rest ; and another every fiftieth year when all lands that had been sold returned into the possession of their former owners.

Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather the fruit thereof ; but in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD ; thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard.

And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years ; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the Jubile to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month ; in the day of Atonements shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof ; it shall be a Jubile unto you ; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. †

* Deut. XVI, 13—15.

† Lev. XXV, 3, 4. 8—10.

Besides the types there are prophecies, some of them as clear as they are grand, they need no explanatory note. Listen to this—proclaiming the final cessation of war and discord:—

It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it: and many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. *

Under the figure of wild beasts tamed and rendered harmless, the calming of all wild passions and the universal reign of love and innocence is thus prophesied :—

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like

* Is. II, 2—4.

the ox : and the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain ; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.*

The peace and happiness will not be merely national and social it will be individual also, and every one of us will feel his heart pulsate with pure untarnished delight, no such mixture of pain and pleasure as we feel now even in our happiest moments; joy will be perfect, pure, endless. For thus it is written :—

In this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory ; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth : for the LORD hath spoken it.†

The prophecy I have already read you from the book of the Revelation is in part a quotation from this passage of Isaiah; and in this passage we have what is not so clearly put before us in that one, we have it announced that this new life of perfect joy will commence from the return of Jesus Christ from heaven ; for thus Isaiah continues :—

* Is. XI, 6—9. † Is. XXV, 6—8.

And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.*

The Christian Church is waiting now for the coming of Jesus Christ; he will bring us perfect salvation; and the prophecy tells of the rapturous joy with which we shall greet him when he comes.

Listen to another description; though this belongs specially to the chosen nation, the Jews, and we of the other nations only share in it in a secondary degree:—

Violence shall no more be heard in thy land,
Wasting nor destruction within thy borders;
But thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.

The sun shall be no more thy light by day;
Neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee;

But the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light,
And thy God thy glory.

Thy sun shall no more go down;
Neither shall thy moon withdraw itself;
For the LORD shall be thine everlasting light,
And the days of thy mourning shall be ended.

Thy people also shall be all righteous;
They shall inherit the land for ever,
The branch of my planting, the work of my hands,
That I may be glorified.†

The long prophecy at the close of the book of Daniel, which I mentioned in my last Lecture, also passes on beyond our own day, and reveals clearly the resurrection to come. It concludes with these words:—

Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.*

And the establishment of one universal kingdom over the whole world, which will for ever prevent the revival of racial jealousies and dissensions, is declared by the prophet Zechariah.—

The LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.†

In addition to this new departure in moral, domestic, and social life, there will be a renewal also of the physical creation.

Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands.

They shall perish, but thou shalt endure:

Yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment,

As a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed.

But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.‡

* Dan. XII, 2, 3. † Zech. XIV, 9. ‡ Ps. CII, 25—27.

This is quoted in the New Testament, where we are taught that the person addressed is the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

And another point revealed is that the mode in which the old heavens and earth will be laid aside will be by fire.

The heavens and the earth which are now are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night ; in the which the heavens shall pass away with fervent heat ; the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*

In the teaching of Jesus Christ the expression "the end of the world" occurs in these several connections.—

(1) He teaches us that the world is like a field of corn, in which both tares and wheat are growing ; the mixture will last until the harvest ; "The harvest is the end of the world". And so we learn that there will be a great and thorough separation between the good and the bad, when Jesus comes back —

Let both grow together until the harvest ; and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them ; but gather the wheat into my barn....

As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world.

* 2 Pet. III, 7, 10.

The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire : there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.*

(2) Again a separation is depicted as the work of fishermen, when they had brought their nets to land, and found them full of fish, some bad and some good.

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind : which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world ; the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire : there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. †

The fisherman's net differs from the harvest field as being a smaller enclosure, and containing only those who have professed to accept the Gospel.

(3) The disciples asked him, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" ‡ In Jesus Christ's answer he does not use this phrase, but he leads on the thoughts of his disciples to his own second coming, and gives many instructions about being ready for it, thus identifying it with the end of

* Matt. XIII, 30, 40—43. † Id. 47—50. ‡ Matt. XXIV, 3.

the world, as the disciples had done in their question. His description of it is in these words.—

Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven ; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn ; and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. *

The suddenness and universality of the separation which will then take place is thus described in another passage ;—

I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed ; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together ; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field ; the one shall be taken and the other left.†

(4) The closing words of the Gospel of S. Matthew contain another mention of the same epoch, not with any description of the great separation then to be effected, but with the assurance that right up to the time when we shall see our Lord and Saviour, and enter into the joy of his manifested presence, we shall have the support and protection of his spiritual presence.

* Matt. XXIV, 30, 31.

† Luke XVII, 34—36.

Lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world.*

If our Lord Jesus Christ was to return now, he would of course find some of his people alive, and some asleep in their graves. This difference is fully recognised, and we are taught what to expect in either case. S. Paul is writing to the Christians at Corinth, who had been disturbed by questions and doubts about the resurrection, and after other teaching he says ;—

Behold, I show you a mystery ; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump : for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality, so when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.†

This song of triumph over death is fitly used when we are laying down any of our loved ones in their last resting place : while we yield to death as con-

* Matt. XXVIII, 20. † 1 Cor. XV, 51—57.

queror now, we rejoice to think that we shall triumph over him before long. The same truth is given us in another Epistle with details added that enable us to anticipate the glorious day more vividly.

This we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

The Apostle John uses the same truth as a ground upon which to urge purity from all that is inconsistent with our glorious hope.

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.†

Yet further distinctness is given to our expectations by what we are taught in the book of the Revelation, for the latter portion of that book tells us of many things still future; it tells us of the destruction of the great apostasy, the glad arraying of the saints

* 1 Thess. IV, 15—17. † 1 John III, 2, 3.

in white, the coming of Jesus Christ as King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, the great outpouring of wrath on those who are against him, the shutting up of Satan as it were with a chain, the resurrection of the blessed and holy dead, their reign with Christ as kings and priests for a thousand years, the one final struggle of the powers of evil after the thousand years are expired, and the judgment of the great white throne when the dead who are not blessed and holy will be called to stand before God. Lastly we have the description of the new heaven and the new earth, of which I have already read you a portion.

I will conclude this Lecture by reading you a parable in which Jesus Christ speaks of his coming back at the end of the world, and shows us what effect the expectation should have upon us now.

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them ; but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh ; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so ;

lest there be not enough for us and you ; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage ; and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.*

* Matt. XXV, 1--13.

LECTURE XIII.

THE TEACHING

OF THE

AVESTA AND THE BIBLE

ON THE SUBJECT OF THE PRINCIPLES OF

AWARD IN THE GREAT JUDGMENT.

Both the Avesta and the Bible speak of Judgment to come, which we cannot escape or evade. Judgment, if

it is not arbitrary and purposeless, must proceed upon some recognised principles; and if we are to prepare for it, we must know those principles. How else can we shape our lives so as to conform to what the Judge requires? Or how else can there be such a thing as condemnation? For none of us can have incurred any penalty.

According to the Avesta judgment is passed on each person at death; and after three nights spent in glad or doleful expectation, as the case may be, the soul is carried away to meet its doom at the Chinvat bridge. The Chinvat bridge is mentioned in several passages of the Avesta : here is one of them.—

Creator, where are those tribunes, where do they assemble, where do they come together, at which a man of the corporeal world gives account for his soul?

Then answered Ahura Mazda; After the man is dead, after the man is departed, after his going, the wicked evil-knowing Daeyas do work. In the third night, after the coming and lighting of the dawn, and when the victorious Mithra places himself on the mountains with pure splendor, and the brilliant sun arises, then the Daeva, Vizaresho by name, O holy Zarathushtra, leads the souls bound, the sinful living, of the wicked Daeva-worshipping men. To the ways which were created by time comes he who is godless, and he who is holy. To the bridge Chinvat comes he, the created by Ahura Mazda, where they interrogate the

consciousness and the soul, regarding the conduct practised in the corporeal world. Thither comes the beautiful, well created, swift, and well formed soul; accompanied by a dog.....this leads away the souls of the pure over the Haraberezaiti, over the bridge Chinvat it brings the host of the heavenly Yazatas.*

It is declared that at this bridge Chinvat is the parting of the ways, whence some souls are taken to Paradise and some to hell. Thus,

^ Praise to the Omniscience of God, who hath sent... wisdom and guidance for all beings who are, were, and will be, and the wisdom of wisdoms, the Manthra Spenta, who effects freedom from hell for the soul at the bridge Chinvat, and leads it over to that Paradise the brilliant sweet smelling of the pure. †

It is also stated, or at least hinted, that on some later day there will be a further assignment of retribution. Thus in the Patet Aderbat these words occur ;—

With the punishment at the bridge, with the bonds and tormentings and chastisements of the mighty of the law, with the punishment of the three nights after the fifty seven years, am I contented and satisfied.

Professor Spiegel's note to this last passage is this ;—

According to the Parsees, on the day of judgment the souls which have not atoned for their sins will be sent back to hell, and tormented during

* Vendidad XIX. † Khordah Avesta XIV.

three days and nights with torments surpassing the usual torments of hell itself.

The principles upon which the award will be given are not clearly set out, but they may be ascertained by a comparison of different passages one with another.

The most determining principle that I can discover, the one that excludes the largest number of mankind from Paradise, is that Salvation is only for Zoroastrians; so that the company of the saved will be comparatively a small one. This seems to be the meaning of the statement that the Mazdayasnian law takes away all sins, coupled with the consignment to perdition of all Karapas and Kavis, for they are excluded simply because they are non-Zoroastrians; that is the only wickedness laid to their charge. So we read in the Gatha Ustvaiti,

To empire have the Karapas and Kavis united themselves,

In order through wicked deeds to destroy the world for men,

Whose own souls, whose own state, becomes hard.

If they come thither where the bridge Chinvat is,

So will they for ever place themselves in the abode of the Drujas.*

Professor Spiegel notes that "the translations make the Karapas and Kavis to signify the Deaf and the Blind; that is, metaphorically, those who will not hear or regard the law of Ahura Mazda." Elsewhere he gives us this note; "According to tradition the Kavis are men

* Yasna, XLV.

who neither can nor will see anything good in the creation of Ahura Mazda, and the Karapas are those who will not hear the precepts of Ahura Mazda."

This raises a curious point, and the Parsees at the present day seem scarcely to be alive to it. What constitutes Zoroastrianism? It is easy to say that hereditary descent, conjoined with the formal assumption of the Sudra and Kusti makes a man a Parsee; and if living authorities so decree it, this is the law in respect of all matters social and economical. But in respect of the judgment of Ahura Mazda how does it appear that he has delegated his functions to any modern Committee to decide who may, and who may not, be admitted into his religion? If his decrees are embodied in the Avesta, and not in the resolutions of a Committee, which may decide one thing to-day and another to-morrow, then foreigners are most certainly admissible. Zoroaster not only admitted them when they requested it, he did his best to compel them, and insisted that Isfendiar should propagate his religion with the sword. Holding then to the ancient writings rather than to modern opinions, let me ask again, What constitutes Zoroastrianism? If Ahura Mazda will sentence unbelievers to eternal perdition, it is surely right to ask, How can a man gain access to the life which alone will lead to salvation? Yet we ask in vain: no answer is vouchsafed. The question seems to be raised in the ninth Fargard of the Vendidad, where Zarathushtra enquires who may perform the Barashnom, but in the answer of Ahura Mazda no mention is made either

of hereditary descent, or of Sudra and Kusti; the conditions required are purity, truth, and knowledge. The words are these;—

They shall look about for a pure man, who speaks true words, and recites the Manthra, who is best acquainted with Mazdayasnian law from a purifier.

I admit that the question is, from one point of view, not a practical one; not many in these days are likely to ask admission into the ranks of the Zoroastrians; but from another point of view it is most decidedly practical; for if without cause or reason they repel all of us from the eternal blessings which they allege are theirs, the natural consequence is that we can but take that religion as ipso facto disproved, which proclaims itself so narrow; it can be but the production of a national tradition, and has no place in the counsels of him who is Lord of the whole earth. This estimate may commend itself not to Europeans only, but also to the thoughtful and unprejudiced among the Parsees themselves.

A second principle of award is embodied in the oft repeated maxim,—good thoughts, good words, good works; which implies that good lives will be rewarded, and bad ones punished. This distinguishes between Zoroastrians and Zoroastrians, excluding some, and allowing only a selection to reach the goal. Unfortunately we are met here also with considerable obscurity; for when Goodness is demanded, we cannot refrain from asking, what constitutes Goodness? and that question will be differently answered according to

the portion of the Avesta upon which we rely. If we look to the Khordah Avesta, the "accomplishment" or "performance" of a Patet would seem to be sufficient Goodness, for thus we read in the Patet Erani :

This heavenly Patet shall be a fast brazen wall like as the earth is broad, the mountains high, the heavens strong, that it may keep the gate of hell fast in bonds, and the way to Paradise open, the way to that best place ; to the shining Garothman which possesses all majesty, that our soul and the souls of the pure at the bridge Chinvat, the great, may step over, freed from trouble and easily.

If we look at the Vendidad, Goodness consists principally in certain performances not difficult to accomplish, such as, giving meat, (*i. e.* giving it to the pure man ;) * or pulling down Dakhmas, where dead men are laid, † or killing a tortoise. ‡ Whereas if we look at the Yasna, we see that a large amount of Goodness consists in repeating the Ahuna Vairya. ¶ This principle moreover seems to involve a setting off of good deeds against bad, somewhat after the fashion of a Debtor and Creditor account, with the prospect of punishment for those persons whose Balance sheet shows a preponderance of bad over good. The Patets certainly imply this ; for they contain professions of many good works, and acknowledgments of many bad ones ; and we also find in one of them these words :—

* The meat must be a specified quantity ;—"Of the size of the body of this my bird Parodars." The bird Parodars is explained to be the Cock. † Farg. VII. ‡ Farg. XIII. ¶ ~~Yasna XIX.~~

The good works which I have hitherto done, which I shall do hereafter, are done for the continual subsistence of good works, for the passing by of sins, for the purification of the soul. If anything still remains over, so that my sins are not yet atoned, then am I contented and agreeing with the punishment of the three nights for it.*

And here a further obscurity arises; for the good deeds which are pronounced to be a sure passport to Paradise may readily enough be performed by the man who has done some of those other deeds that are inextinguishable, and lead hopelessly to perdition; such, for instance, as burning a dead body, or covering it up with clothes, or walking four steps without the sacred shirt and string. Now if a Zoroastrian repeats the Ahuna Vairya in proper form, and then walks away without his string, what will be the sentence of the Judge? Will he ignore the Vendidad, and bring that man to Paradise according to the Yasna? Or will he refuse the claim to salvation from the Yasna, and condemn the man under the Vendidad?

A third principle may perhaps be recognised, *viz.* that goodness is to some extent vicarious. One man may perform a Patet for another. So we learn from the Patet Erani, which contains this clause.

If any one after my departure, out of love to my soul, or if my son performs the Patet before one of those set over who is at the place, so am I agreed thereto.

* Patet Aderbat.

And again in the same Patet recognition of vicarious performance appears in this clause :—

If I have taken on myself the Patet for any and have not performed it, and misfortune has thereby come upon his soul or his descendants, I repent &c.

Whether there is any idea of assigning over other good works from one man to another or not, I have not discovered ; but if the performance of a Patet can be so assigned, and a man can give his deceased friend the benefit of this good work, there is no apparent reason why the same should not be the case also in respect of saying Ahuna Vairyas, or killing tortoises.

The Bible is much more clear, and much more just, and at the same time much more merciful.

It entirely agrees with the Avesta in declaring that the state of each man in the next world is determined when his soul leaves the body. This life is our term of probation. Thus Jesus Christ, when he gives an account of two men, as they passed through death to the state beyond, shows that the opportunity for conversion from bad to good, from Satan to God was at an end when this life was finished. Listen to this teaching.—

There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table : moreover the dogs

came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed; so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.*

You will observe that while other biographers have to desist from their narrative of a man's doings and sufferings, when they reach his death, it is not so with Jesus Christ; he can see what lies beyond the grave, just as clearly as what lies this side.

The Bible also agrees with the Avesta in teaching that there will be a further arraignment of all persons, good and bad, before the judgment seat of God. It tells us that the risen dead, body and soul re-united, will be judged according to the record of their past lives: this record is spoken of metaphorically as a book,

* Luke XVI, 19—26.

which is equivalent to saying that nothing will have been forgotten ; the record will be fully and perfectly preserved. The Judge in that great day will be Jesus Christ.

The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.

As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself ; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of Man.*

The solemn final judgment, when the dead who have not believed in Jesus will receive their sentence, is thus described.—

I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away ; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God : and the books were opened ; and another book was opened, which is the book of life ; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it ; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them ; and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.†

* John V, 22, 26, 27. † Rev. XX, 11—15.

To understand the principles upon which Judgment will be pronounced, we must bear in mind that all persons by nature are included in one group, all are sinful and therefore "come short of the glory of God";* *i. e.* they have no claim to reach that glory, and never will reach it, unless his mercy rests upon them to bring them to it. Agreeably with this, king David, in his Psalm of penitence, traces his sinfulness back to his birth.—

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.†

And S. Paul says this is true of mankind at large.

In time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. ‡

At the same time the grace of God which opens the door of salvation is free to all; the offer is not exclusively for one class, or race, or condition of men. God is the Father of all; and he has sent glad tidings of free salvation to all through Jesus Christ. The angel who announced to the shepherds that Jesus was born, declared this;—

Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. ¶

* Rom. III, 23. † Ps. LI, 5. ‡ Eph. II, 2, 3. ¶ Luke II, 10.

The Lord himself, shortly before he ascended into heaven, declared this ;—

Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.*

The Apostle Paul, in his instructions to his son Timothy, declared this ;—

There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus ; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.†

The Apostle John, with earnest insistence upon the universality of the offer, declared this ;—

He is the propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.‡

Consequently,—and this is the first principle of award,—all are saved who accept the offer, by believing on Jesus Christ : and those are lost who reject him.

God so loved the world,—observe that ; his love and his offer extend to the whole world ;—so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.¶

Let him that is athirst, come : and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.§

The question of accepting or refusing the offer of salvation through Jesus Christ involves the division of mankind into three groups ;—believers, rejecters, and those who have never heard the message, so

* Mark XVI, 15.

† 1 Tim. II, 5, 6.

‡ 1 John II, 2.

¶ John III, 16.

§ Rev. XXII, 17.

that they have neither believed nor rejected it. These last come within my subject, neither to-night as Lecturer, nor at other times as Preacher of the Gospel. I will say no more about them than this ;—that the Judge of all the earth will do right in his dealing with them, and that however many of them finally obtain salvation, it will be through no other name but that of God's appointed Saviour of the world ; he can save them, though they have not heard of him. For so it is written ;—

By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,...doth this man stand here before you whole. Neither is there salvation in any other ; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

Concerning those who have heard the Gospel message, the second principle of award is, Judgment according to works.

We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.†

Thinkest thou this, O man, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?...Who will render to every man according to his deeds ; to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life ; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth,

* Acts IV, 10—12. † 2 Cor. V, 10.

but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile : for there is no respect of persons with God. *

This demand for good works, including in that term good words and good thoughts also, is not satisfied by any merely outside appearance of goodness. It is not good, in any way that God will accept, if a man repeats texts or prayers as a sound and thought exercise, or if he reads them as a sight exercise; it is not good if he attends diligently to his business and practises honesty only for his own benefit; it is not good even if he shows kindness, and gives away large sums of money, unless his actions are the out-come of love in his heart, love to God and love to his neighbor. Hospitality without affection is thus set aside;—

Eat not thou the bread of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meats; for as he thinketh in his heart, so is he; eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee. †

Seeming generosity in almsgiving is similarly rejected.—

Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them : otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore

* Rom. II, 3, 6—11. † Prov. XXIII, 6, 7.

when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do, in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth ; that thine alms may be in secret ; and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.*

And a still more inclusive rejection of works seemingly good, but unloving, is given us in this passage ;—

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge ; and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.†

What really constitutes goodness in the sight of God is that our actions, words, and thoughts, should be under the moving influence of love. Speaking of our duty towards our neighbor, S. Paul sums it all up in that one word.

He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor ; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. ‡

* Matt. VI, 1—4. † 1 Cor. XIII, 1—3. ‡ Rom. XIII, 8, 10.

Speaking of our whole duty, towards God as well as towards our neighbor, Jesus Christ teaches us similarly. He was asked which is the great commandment in the law? And his answer was;—

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*

Now this principle, of judgment according to works, affects the two groups of men, believers and unbelievers, in different ways. Those that have rejected Jesus Christ will find that all their evil deeds are recorded against them, and will be dealt with in strictest justice. According to the degree of sinfulness, so will be the degree of punishment. Servants who acknowledge themselves under the Master's commands, but have not faithfully performed those commands, will be cast out from his presence: others who have deliberately defied his authority will suffer more terribly. This distinction Jesus Christ has made very clear in one of his parables. He tells us of a nobleman, meaning himself, who went away from his country to come back again as king. One of his servants, who had been entrusted with a pound, failed to use it for his master as he should have done. Some of the citizens wholly refused the sovereignty of their king, and made themselves his enemies. When he

* Matt. XXII, 37—40.

returned he pronounced judgment upon the servant and the citizens ; the sentences were very different.—

He said unto them that stood by, 'Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given ; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away. But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me. *

Do not suppose it is a slight matter whether you accept Jesus Christ or not ; that it is a matter merely of opinion, and carries no practical consequences with it. Through Jesus Christ God offers us life ; and if we refuse the offer, what remains but death ? And whom have we to thank but ourselves, if death becomes our portion ? This is how S. John puts the alternative before us.—

He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself : he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar ; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life ; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. †

But the other group, those who are trusting in Jesus Christ, have nothing to fear.

* Luke XIX, 24, 26, 27. † 1 John V, 10—12.

Fear not, little flock ; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*

There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. †

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life. ‡

They have loved and served their Lord, and the principle of reward according to works affects them in the way of determining what their share of the good things to come shall be. The parable of the pounds shows this in the clearest way ; the same that tells of the unfaithful servant and the rebellious citizens. Ten servants were entrusted with ten pounds by their lord, to trade with during his absence ; each had one pound. The purpose of the parable is not to explain how God will deal with differences of endowment, but with differences of diligence. And the servant who gained ten pounds was rewarded with ten cities, the one who gained five pounds was rewarded with five cities. In each case the reward vastly exceeded the value of the work done, but it was strictly in proportion to that value. ¶

A third principle is involved in the forgiveness of sins ; it is Vicarious Atonement. This is very different from the vicarious goodness allowed in the Avesta. There it is laid down that one man may do good works, and another man get the credit of

* Luke XII, 32. † Rom. VIII, 1. ‡ John V, 24. ¶ Luke XIX, 16—19.

them : but in the Bible we are taught that the Judge vindicates his justice by inflicting the full penalty which sin has deserved, at the same time he offers free pardon to the sinner, for he accepts the penalty Himself. If we come to Jesus, truly believing in him, and repenting of our sins, he justifies us in the sight of God; in other words, he deals with ~~the~~ the anger of God against sin in such wise that that anger never touches us : in Scripture phrase, he is the Propitiation for our sins. Hear these words ;—

The righteousness of God is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference ; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God ; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus ; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood ; to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God ; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. *

And in like manner S. John teaches us ;—

We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous ; and he is the propitiation for our sins.†

An illustration of this Vicarious Atonement has been found in an incident alleged to have taken place in England, during the reign of one of our early kings. On one occasion when the king was sitting to ad-

* Rom. III, 21—26. † 1 John II, 1, 2.

minister justice, the king's own son was brought as a prisoner before the court : the king loved his son, but he would not allow his love to mar his justice : the crime with which the prisoner was charged was a serious one, and the evidence against him was conclusive : the punishment attached to that crime by law was a very heavy fine, or a long term of imprisonment : judgment was pronounced accordingly. As the young prince had no means to pay the fine, he stood sentenced to the long term of imprisonment. But as soon as the judge had performed his duty, he stepped down from his throne, placed himself alongside of the prisoner, and himself paid the whole of the fine. Then embracing his son, he bade him Go free, and sin no more. The illustration is apt as far as it goes ; but it quite stops short of the great truth that what Jesus Christ suffered for us was death ; and that, not merely as it met the eye of the beholder, but as it was inflicted by the inflexible justice of God. His cry on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" shows that he was enduring other sufferings than those of the scourge, and the thorns, and the nails.

There is yet another principle of award explained in the Bible. It is that Differences of capacity, and Differences of opportunity, will be fully recognised and allowed for. The two points are taken separately for clearness of explanation.

There is difference of capacity between an unlettered man and one who is highly educated; between a novice in any department of life and a man of ripe experience ;

between a poor man and a millionaire. Such differences are dealt with in Jesus Christ's Parable of the Talents.—A master entrusted his servants with money to trade with on his behalf ; one servant had five talents, another two, and another one. Here is full recognition of variety of endowment or capacity. And when the servant who had five talents, and the servant who had two, showed equal diligence in working for their Lord, they were greeted with exactly the same words of approval. The man who brought in four talents as the result of his work, and the man who brought in ten, were welcomed alike, because each had doubled his capital ; and the fact that they started with unequal endowments was not their doing, but the master's.

There is difference of opportunity if we compare a child at school with the teacher of a class ; or a domestic servant with a leader of society. One of us might refuse to join in a yachting excursion on Sunday, but our influence would not have the same weight as King Edward VII's when he refused to do so during his recent visit to the Emperor of Germany at Kiel. Jesus Christ spoke a Parable to illustrate this point also. The owner of a vineyard went out into the market place to hire laborers. Some he made an agreement with early in the morning, and they did a full day's work, some he engaged at different hours during the day, and some at the eleventh hour. When the day was over he paid them all alike. In this Parable there is no reference to difference of capacity, or of diligence ;

the difference is solely of opportunity; those who did only one hour's work had not been standing idle because they refused the call to work, but because they had not received it; and so, fastening our attention upon this one point of opportunity, the teaching of the Parable is that the Will is taken for the Deed. The same teaching is given us elsewhere without a Parable; for Jesus Christ said.—

He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward: and whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.*

These then are the great Principles of Award which we learn from the Bible will determine the sentence of eternal judgment. None can claim on his own merits to be acquitted of guilt: all may secure an acquittal, if they will come to Jesus Christ and accept it through him. Those who refuse to come will be sentenced in strictest justice according to their works. Those who have obtained forgiveness will be admitted to glory; and in the apportionment of their reward they will find that full regard has been paid, not only to difference of diligence, but also to difference of opportunity, and of capacity, so that this saying will perfectly be fulfilled,—

Wisdom is justified of all her children.†

* Matt. X, 41, 42.

† Luke VII, 35.

LECTURE XIV.

THE CATHOLICITY

OF THE

AVESTA AND THE BIBLE.

“Catholic” is more than “National” as the whole is greater than a part. Some things are distinctly National only, as for instance, Laws which are made by the government of one nation, for observance only within the limits of that nation. And to some extent Customs are National, or even Provincial, confined to a single province or country; or, narrower still, practised by a single clan or family.

But is Religion a National thing ?

It is of course competent for the Almighty God, to grant a revelation, or a series of revelations to a particular nation, or a particular man ; and the revelation may specially pertain to that nation or that man. But if God is the Creator of all, his worship will surely be what all can share in; and his revelation will include some provision for the needs of all. Even if it were otherwise, and only one section of man could offer him acceptable worship, yet certainly the revelation which

calls for this narrow worship must be consistent with the wider teaching which is true for all. Truth must be consistent with itself, and no special enlargement in detail can be at variance with its wider generalities. If to our apprehension there is the appearance of contradiction, we should expect that God would either solve our difficulty, by adding an explanation, or at all events would recognise that he has allowed a difficulty to meet us : he will either say, Listen to this explanation ; or he will say, What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter. These words occur in the Bible ;* they are Jesus Christ's reply to one of his disciples, when he washed their feet, and this disciple remonstrated against an act so incomprehensible, and, as he supposed, so undignified.

There would be no less occasion for a promise of future explanation, if a personal or national revelation seemed to contradict Catholic truth ; and so we reasonably demand that the revelation which professes to be from God shall be Catholic, or consistent with what is Catholic.

Now see how the Avesta and the Bible answer this demand.

The Avesta begins with an account of Creation, which is distinctly National :† it names 16 regions as successively created by Ahura Mazda. Some of these are recognised under their ancient names, others are not so ; but it seems pretty clear that they are all

* John XIII, 7.

† See above; Lecture III.

Iranian ; and consequently the question suggests itself, was the book written by an Iranian who knew of no land but his own, or if he did, considered the others not worth mention ? If so, we have here a nationalism quite inconsistent with Catholicity. Moreover in the counter-creations of Angra Mainyus there is nothing that transcends the same narrow limits. The later account of creation in the Khordah Avesta is of a different charcter ; it speaks of the formation of "animals" and "men" in quite a general way ; and if we had no earlier account in the Vendidad, we might acknowledge this later one as Catholic ; but now we are shut up to the alternative,—either the two accounts are irreconcilable, or neither of them is Catholic.

The next point I will notice is the position assigned to the Cow. There are several passages in the Gathas where the Cow, or the Bull, seems to stand as representing humanity ; for if it represents all sentient creation, then the teaching of Zoroastrianism would be for animals as well as for men : but as no mention occurs of animals being treated like human beings at death, or beyond death, it is only fair to suppose that they are not held to be joint-recipients of salvation with men. These are some of the passages.—

Unto you, O Ahura and Asha, the soul of the Kine cried aloud ; For whom did ye create me ? and by whom did ye fashion me ? On me comes the assault of wrath,...

Upon this the Creator of the Kine asked of Asha (Righteousness); How was thy guardian for the Kine appointed by thee, when, as having power over all her fate, ye made her? In what manner did ye secure for her, together with pasture, a cattle-chief who was both skilled and likewise energetic.*

Ahura will speak his rebuke, for as to those doctrines which men may be basely delivering, repelled by the holiest action, and galled by its sacred truth, God hath said; Evil are they who have slain the Kine's life by a blessing, and have cursed her while they offered to help her.†

As by the laws of the primeval world, so will our spiritual chieftain act, that chief besought for by the Kine, and named as Zarathushtra by the Lord.‡

And these (the Daeva worshippers) have also never given us tribal wealth nor blessings, nor for the Kine have they brought waters to the fields for the sake of the righteous Order in our hosts, to further on their growth and welfare.§

The position of the Cow also is peculiar as associated with numerous rites of ablution and potation; rites which it is difficult for non-Zoroastrians to think of without a shudder, and which would of themselves suffice to show that the Zoroastrian religion is unfitted for Catholic reception; for there are large tracts of

* Yasna XXIX. † Yasna XXXII. ‡ Yasna XXXIII.
 § Yasna XLIV.

the earth's surface where the "products of the cow" cannot be had.

Along with the Cow, the Dog is accorded very special treatment. It is preferred far above man, if the punishment for its ill treatment furnishes any indication. Giving bad food to a dog is punishable with stripes, the minimum number being 50; assault upon a man is punishable, the minimum number of stripes being 5. Killing a dog is assigned stripes from 500 to 10000, according to the kind of dog killed; killing a man is assigned 90 stripes. This certainly does not look as if Ahura Mazda was regarded as the Father of mankind. The sacredness of a weasel's life also is out of all proportion to that of a man.

Now is not one necessary inference from such preferential treatment of these animals, that the book as a whole was meant exclusively for an agricultural people? There was no contemplation in its author's mind of Zoroastrianism spreading so as to become the religion of a sea-faring people, or a people living in cities; even roving nomads are reckoned accursed.

She (the Kine) chose the husbandman, the thrifty toiler in the fields, as a holy master endowed with the Good Mind's wealth. Never, Mazda, shall the thieving nomad share the good creed.*

This exclusiveness is marked in another way, *viz.* by the eulogies pronounced upon the cultivation of corn. It is not only that to grow corn is advantageous

* *Yasna XXXI.*

for the sustenance of the community, which is obvious enough, but it has a directly beneficial effect in driving away fiends.—

Maker of the material world, thou holy one, what is the food that fills the law of Mazda (literally, what is the stomach of the law)? Ahura Mazda answered; It is sowing corn again and again, O Spitama Zarathushtra. He who sows corn, sows holiness; he makes the law of Mazda grow higher and higher; he makes the law of Mazda as fat as he can with a hundred acts of adoration, a thousand oblations, ten thousand sacrifices. When barley is coming forth the Daevas start up; when the corn is growing rank, then faint the Daevas' hearts; when the corn is being ground, the Daevas groan; when wheat is coming forth, the Daevas are destroyed. In that house they can no longer stay, from that house they are beaten away, wherein wheat is thus coming forth. It is as though red hot iron were turned about in their throats, when there is plenty of corn.*

There is nevertheless a contemplation of universal proselytism in the Gatha Ahunavaiti. It is not very clearly expressed, but such seems to be the meaning. The words are these;—

Declare unto us, O Ahura, that vow which is for the seeing, as those endowed with mental light. Yea, declare thou this that we may know it, O

* Vendidad III.

Mazda. With the tongue of thy mouth speak it, that as I preach its mighty truths, I may make all the living believers.*

And this is supported by more than one mention of propagating the religion by force of arms.

Let not a man of you lend a hearing to Mathra, or to command of that sinner, ignorant as he is; for home, village, region, and province, he would deliver to ruin and death. But fly ye to arms without hearing, and hew ye them all with the halberd.†

I pray in my blessing that he (the province governor) may conquer in victorious battles every malicious foe, and each malignant, profane in thoughts, and words, and actions, that he may indeed be constantly victorious in his own religious thoughts, and words, and deeds, and unvarying in the smiting of every foe, and of every Dæva worshipper, and that he may, as he proceeds, be well rewarded, and of good repute possessing a far foreseeing preparation of the soul. And I pray with blessings thus : Live thou long and blessed be thou ; hail to thee ; live for the aid of holy men, and for the crushing of the evil.‡

And so in spite of the current movement at the present time to refuse all applications for admission into the ranks of Zoroastrianism, except to children born of Zoroastrian parents, I cannot but acknowledge

* Yasna XXXI. † Yasna XXXI. ‡ Afrinagan Gahanbar.

there is this one element of Catholicity in the religion of the Avesta.

It would seem as if Zoroaster was large enough in his ideas to project vaguely a universal spread of his religion, but neither he nor his successors could formulate regulations at all suitable for other countries than their own. This was not for want of opportunity for teaching other countries ; we read of enquirers from Greece and India who came and were convinced, and carried the Iranian religion back to their own lands ; but there the matter ends ; neither East nor West adopted the foreign tenets, and Zoroastrianism has remained till now what it was at first, exclusively Iranian.

The Catholicity of the Bible stands on a different footing. Not that all the specific regulations contained in it were intended for all times and all peoples, some of those regulations were avowedly local and temporary ; but they were, in their inner meaning, explanatory of the true intent of the Spirit of God, and that true intent, rightly understood, is for all.

The opening chapters of the Bible contain the history of creation, and of the early generations of mankind ; they dwell at some length upon the entrance of sin into the world, and upon the flood, matters that concern us all ; while they pass over many generations with no more mention than barely the names of men, and the age to which each man lived. From the eleventh chapter of Genesis onwards, the history becomes more limited in scope. The nations of the world at

large were left to the knowledge of God which they inherited, or might have inherited, from Noah, and for a while further revelations were granted to one nation only, the descendants of Abraham. The Biblical narrative is similarly limited; it is devoted to Abraham, and his family, and the Israelitish nation into which that family grew; and it touches upon the affairs of other nations, only as they affected Israel. The prophets in like manner addressed themselves to Israel; and most of what they said with regard to other nations was uttered from an Israelite standpoint; yet again and again we perceive a larger sympathy in their words, and a gleam of Catholicity shows that the world-wide blessing was still in view: occasionally as they look forward to our times, we can feel that they are free from national exclusiveness, and that their point of view is our own. In the New Testament the sayings and doings of Jesus Christ have no taint of narrowness; he called himself Son of Man, to indicate that he had taken to himself not a portion of our humanity merely, but the whole; and we are shown how the disciples were educated out of their Jewish littleness, into the large hearted Catholicity which their Master urged upon them. They were slow to learn it, but when they had learnt it, they gave themselves to it with intelligence and zeal. Thus the universality of the Bible, as being God's message to man, is fully maintained; even the specially Israelitish sections are meant for us in the way of instruction, if not in the way of regulation; and the temporary abandonment of the rest of the world we are

shown to have been in pursuance of God's eternal purpose, for in leaving the nations to themselves for a while he was teaching us the impotence of unguided human wisdom.

A few passages will show you what I have been saying.—

In the history of Abraham, just where the Bible first narrows down, and becomes the record of a single family, there are anticipations of the blessings granted to him being extended over the whole race. This is the blessing as he first received it.—

The LORD said to Abraham, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house unto a land that I will show thee : and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing : and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. *

Similar words were spoken to him when he showed himself willing to sacrifice even his only son at God's command.

In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice. †

In Abraham's pleading with God for Sodom, he made use of an address that shows he had been taught to recognise all the world as under God's care, no less than himself : he said,—

* Gen. XII, 1—3. † Gen. XXII, 18.

Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? *

The same inclusive prospect that was contained in Abraham's blessing was given also to Jacob ;—

In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. †

In Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple he extended his supplications to include other nations besides his own.—

Moreover concerning a stranger, that is not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for thy name's sake; (for they shall hear of thy great name, and of thy strong hand, and of thy stretched out arm;) when he shall come and pray toward this house; hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for: that all people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel. ‡

King Asa made a treaty with the king of Syria, and in rebuking him the seer Hanani said,

The eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. ¶

Naaman the Syrian captain, when he was cured of leprosy, came and stood before the prophet Elisha, and said,

Now I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel. §

* Gen. XVIII. 25. † Gen. XXVIII. 14. ‡ 1 Kin. VIII. 41—43.
 ¶ 2 Chron. XVI. 9. § 2 Kin. V. 15.

Hezekiah when he was threatened by the king of Assyria, in his prayer for deliverance used these words,

Now therefore, O LORD our God, I beseech thee save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD God, even thou only.*

Listen to a few verses from the Psalms.—

The LORD most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth.

God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding.† ;

God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us.

That thy way may be known upon earth,

Thy saving health among all nations.

Let the people praise thee, O God;

Let all the people praise thee.

O let the nations be glad and sing for joy;

For thou shalt judge the people righteously,

And govern the nations upon earth.‡

His name shall endure for ever:

His name shall be continued as long as the sun:

And men shall be blessed in him:

All nations shall call him blessed.¶

And listen to these from the prophets.—

Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.

* 2 Kin. XIX, 10. † Ps. XLVII, 2, 7. ‡ Ps. LXVII, 1--4.
¶ Ps. LXXII, 17.

I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.*

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him : his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. †

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion ; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem : behold, thy king cometh unto thee ; he is just, and having salvation ; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off : and he shall speak peace unto the heathen : and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth. ‡

The words of Jesus Christ have nothing narrow or un-Catholic in them. Take these as samples.—

In his first recorded sermon he intimated plainly that he was not bringing a message only for the Jews. Illustrating his own position he referred to two prophets

* Is. XLV, 22, 23. † Dan. VII, 13, 14. ‡ Zech. IX, 9, 10.

who had ministered to persons outside their own nation ; and he said,

Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country. But I tell you of a truth ; many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years, and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land ; but unto none of them was Elijah sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet ; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.*

When he was asked why he did not enforce fasting on his disciples according to the Jewish custom, his answer was to the effect that the national custom was too narrow for his Catholic views. The Jews were required by their sacred law to fast on the 10th day of the 7th month, and the custom of keeping weekly fasts in addition was held in high esteem by the stricter sects. But neither the weekly fast, nor the annual one could be fitly adopted as an essential element in the religion that was designed for all nations. To have retained the Jewish custom, and enforced it generally, would have been like putting new wine into old wineskins, or piecing an old garment with cloth from a new one. At the same time fasting for good and sufficient cause was declared to be a right, and

* Luke IV, 24—27.

even necessary, Christian practice ; the sufficient cause being one that should appeal to the hearts of true worshippers in every place. These are his words.—

Can ye make the children of the bride-chamber fast while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days. And he spake also a parable unto them ; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old : if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles (*i. e.* skins) ; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles, and both are preserved.*

He constantly called himself Son of Man ; meaning by that title to teach us, that all mankind may derive righteousness and life through him, just as all derive sin and death through Adam, our first father in the natural sense. These are instances.—

No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up ; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.†

As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he

* Luke V, 34—38. † John III, 13—15.

given to the Son to have life in himself ; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also because he is the Son of Man.*

He refused to limit true worship to any particular locality, giving a description of it that leaves it free and open to all persons in all places, the only restriction being purely subjective.—

The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth ; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit ; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.†

In one of his parables he spoke of the range through which his Gospel should be proclaimed as a harvest field ; and in his explanation he said, "The field is the world."‡

And in his parting commands to his disciples, when he sent them forth as Missionaries, he gave them the same world-wide field for their labour.—

All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth : go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.§

The history contained in the book of the Acts relates to the fulfilment of the Lord's command, so far as pertained to the first period of about 30 years. The great miracle of the Day of Pentecost, ten days only

* John V, 26, 27. † John IV, 23, 24. ‡ Matt. XIII, 38.

§ Matt. XXVIII, 18, 19.

after Jesus Christ ascended into heaven, gave the disciples the equipment they needed for commencing their mission, for it endowed them with power to speak different languages. For a while however the Apostles supposed that they were to confine their teaching to the Jews who spoke those languages, and further instructions were issued to them to correct their mistake. The enlargement began when a persecution drove many Christians away from Jerusalem, and they told their friends and neighbours what they had learnt, not keeping only to Jews. One of them, a Church worker named Philip, preached to the Samaritans ; and from Samaria he was sent by the Spirit of God to instruct and baptise an Ethiopian, an officer of state, who had been to Jerusalem to worship. Peter, one of the Apostles, was invited by a Roman centurion to go and preach in his house at Caesarea ; a vision from God directed him to accept the invitation, and the result was that the centurion and his friends were baptised. A Church sprang up at Antioch in Syria, and a minister was sent from Jerusalem to take charge of it. From this Antioch the Apostle Paul went forth on his Missionary career, and all the latter portion of the book of the Acts is occupied with his sayings and doings. He worked through Syria, Cyprus, Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Greece ; so that a few years after he began he was able to write to the Christians at Rome, "From Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ."*

* Rom. XV, 19.

When after much work, and the endurance of many hardships, he brought offerings from some of his converts to relieve the distress of the Christians at Jerusalem, he was arrested on a false charge, and in his defence before a crowd of Jews, he narrated the story of his conversion, and told them that Jesus Christ had sent him to the Gentiles. At that word they raised an outcry of disapproval, and he was unable to go on with his speech, but was hurried off to prison. It was some years before he was set at liberty: meantime he wrote epistles to different Churches. One or two passages from those epistles will suffice to show the Catholic character of the Gospel he preached.

By revelation he made known unto me the mystery, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of man, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; to wit, that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel.* Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and

* Eph. III, 3, 5. 6. The 6th verse is quoted from the Revised Version.

that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. *

Ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him; where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all and in all. †

The words of the song which the Apostle John heard in heaven, when the Spirit called him thither, may fitly close this part of my subject. The Lamb of God had taken a sealed book out of the hand of him that sat upon the throne, and the elders fell down before the Lamb, and sang a song of praise at his feet. The words were these.—

Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth. ‡

It still remains to notice how the Catholicity of the two books is indicated by the rites and ceremonies enjoined by them.

The distinctive apparel of the Zoroastrians has nothing specially local about it even if the materials from which the shirt and string must be formed are not to be had in every place; for they could readily be carried

* Phil. II, 8—11. † Col. III, 9—11. ‡ Rev. V, 9, 10.

from one place to another. It is otherwise with the juice of the Haoma, and the "products of the cow," and the "corpse-eating birds." These things are essentials, and they stamp Locality upon Zoroastrian worship. If Zoroastrians travel to cold countries they have to relinquish some of their religious observances. Even in England they are obliged to do what is denounced in the Avesta as an unpardonable sin ; they must either bury or burn their dead. Of course living authorities in Bombay or elsewhere may issue a licence for such proceedings, and pronounce them justifiable, but it is a departure from the Avesta ; it is a confession that the religion of the Avesta is not for the whole world, and therefore,—how can the conclusion be avoided ?—that it is not from God. The rites commanded by Jesus Christ for his Church I need not explain again, as I have already told you of them in my Lecture on Ritual. I will only ask you to observe how entirely free they are from anything that would tie them down to being merely local : they may be practised without difficulty in all parts of the world. The initial rite is Baptism ; and though Jesus Christ himself was baptised in a river, he said nothing about the quantity of water to be used ; a very few drops are sufficient, as the external rite is symbolical merely ; true Baptism is that of the heart. The Laying on of hands is wholly independant of local conditions. And in the Supper of the Lord, though the materials commanded for use are not the natural products of quite all the countries in the world, yet they are easy of transport : the carriage of un-

leavened bread (biscuits) and wine interposes no hindrance, scarcely even any difficulty, in the way of Christians joining together in their memorial feast.

It is perhaps travelling outside my proper range if I ask you to think of the reception which the two religions have had in the world, but it is so germane to the subject of Catholicity, and the contrast between the two is so confirmatory of the position already advanced, that I will give you just this brief statement.

The religion of Zoroaster was once that of a large and prosperous nation : Persian kings imposed their will upon all countries from Ethiopia to India. The Greeks humbled the Persians and did not adopt their religion ; the Romans absorbed the Greeks, and remained untouched by Zoroastrianism ; and so as the Persian kingdom shrank, the religion shrank with it. The later Roman empire was Christian, but fell away into idolatry, and when Mohammedanism arose, it drove back both the so-called Christianity of the Eastern Roman empire, and the Zoroastrianism of the Persian. Zoroastrianism has never recovered itself ; its adherents have made it a national religion exclusively, and the nation has dwindled to such an extent that if gathered together it would be equal to the population of only a moderate sized town. Christianity, on the other hand when it was displaced from a portion of the territory it had occupied, advanced in other directions: it has taken possession of Europe, America, and Australasia ; it is spreading over Asia, Africa, and Oceania; and even the countries from which it was

driven out it is beginning to re-occupy. Surely the Providence of God is adding proof on a large scale, to what is clearly discernable from the books themselves, that the one religion and not the other, is meant for the whole world.

LECTURE XV.

POINTS OF CONTACT

OF THE

AVESTA AND THE BIBLE WITH

MODERN SCIENCE.

Modern science has done wonderful things ; it has acquired the power of gazing into far-off depths ; it can read secrets undreamed of by our forefathers ; it can read the history of ancient events when there was no human hand in existence to record them ; it can explain mysteries ; it can increase comforts ; it can in some instances prolong life : in all these achievements it is adding fuller and fuller harmonies to the ever fresh melody of the shepherd Psalmist as he sang :—

The heavens declare the glory of God,
And the firmament showeth his handy work.*

Modern science also supplies many a test by which ancient writings may be tried. If an ancient writer has indulged in poetical fancy, or has related current events that were passing before his eye, a scientific test is not possible, and is not wanted; but if he has told of physical phenomena and their causes, he has come within the range of these tests, and any random writing is pretty sure to be detected.

This is emphatically the case with the story of Creation. Both the Avesta and the Bible give us an account of how the world was created; indeed the Avesta gives us two accounts, not very full, and not very consistent. The Bible gives us one only, not couched in technical terms, but expressed in ordinary language, for the simple reason that what we understand as technical language is of modern introduction. As however I spoke to you at some length on this part of the subject in my Lecture on Cosmogony, I will say no more about it now, but will pass on to other points connected with the same subject.

There are several other such points on which our books, one or both of them, come into contact with modern science, and so expose themselves to be tested as to their truthfulness. I invite you to consider whether the result is that the books are verified or disproved.

* Ps. XIX, 1.

In the Avesta we are introduced to the era of Yima without any hint as to how long the world had existed before his time, so that there are no data for comparing the chronology of his life with that of Noah ; but what is related of them, and of the flood that came during their lives, suggests the identification of the two men. But before going on to the flood, there is an incident to notice in connection with Yima, that has no counterpart in the Biblical history of Noah. Yima enlarged the earth to one third larger than before ; to two thirds larger than before ; and finally to double its original size. Such a doubling of the size of the earth is no doubt conceivable, if it were done at the command of God, and by his power ; and if the occurrence were scientifically verified, we should have to infer that the writer of the Vendidad was better informed, at least on this point, than the writer of the book of Genesis. But we are told that the enlargement took place after the earth was already inhabited by animals and men ; which means that in historic times a new formation has been introduced over half the surface of the earth, wholly discontinuous with the stratification of the other half. It is perhaps needless to tell you that Geology knows no such two-fold arrangement of the crust of the earth ; one half marked with many successive epochs of formation, the other half devoid of all such marks. The story of Yima is unhistorical. During the time of this same Yima, the Avesta tells us there was a deluge, and his preparation for it took the form of an enclosure of clay,

into which men and animals were gathered. The deluge was of snow. I will not stop to question how snow could have been fended off or rendered innocuous by an enclosure of clay ; it is more to my purpose to remark that both snow and a clay enclosure are temporary things, and would pass away without leaving any permanent record of their existence that science could investigate. The whole question of Yima's Flood would be irrelevant, only that a comparison with Noah's flood is forced upon us by this remarkable fact, that some traditions of a flood in early times seem to have been well nigh universal. The early writings of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, Babylonians, Greeks, Romans, and other nations, all contain mention of some such catastrophe. The Babylonian record, discovered by Mr. George Smith, resembles the Scripture narrative in many details, and amongst others, in relating that the ark was carried, not seaward, as a torrent of rain would naturally have carried it, but in the reverse direction up to the mountains. In China the hero Fo-he was saved from a flood with his wife, three sons, and three daughters, eight persons in all ; just as in the Bible. And the Indian story of Manu being rescued assigns him also seven companions. Were it not for these other traditions we might set it down to accident that there is some similarity between the second Fargard of the Vendidad and the book of Genesis ; but now we cannot possibly do so ; some one of these accounts must be the original one from which the others have diverged as time went on : the

original story may be true ; and, if so, the others, so far as they differ from it, must be false. The story of Noah's flood, that is of a rushing torrent of water sufficient to cover all the hills, offers ground for comparison with the verdict of geology ; hence we cannot but hold the Yima story in hand to see if it is discredited by Noah's being verified.

Now observe. There is a wide spread deposit of unstratified soil, or boulder clay, diversified with beds of shingle, over a large portion of the earth's surface. Early Geologists named this clay Diluvium, believing it to be the result of the flood. Sedgwick, some eighty years ago used this term : he wrote of a comparatively recent catastrophe, caused by a flood, the marks of which were to be seen over all the strata of the earth. Other geologists objected, and ridiculed him for believing the Bible story, they said the deposit had been gradually formed through long ages ; they talked freely of millions of years. And in support of the enormous figures in which they indulged another calculation was brought forward, which showed, from the rate of accumulation of sand over the base of an Egyptian monument, that the age of the said monument ran into tens of thousands of years. Unfortunately for the reckoning a Roman tile was found at the base of the monument, and the thousands shrivelled up into hundreds. Nevertheless some of the geologists maintained their reckoning in respect of the boulder clay. Lyell was among the foremost of those who refused to connect it with the flood ; he invented a new name for it : strange

to say, his new name was just as suggestive of a flood of waters as Sedgwick's had been; he called it Inundation mud. Howard, another geologist, objected to the gradual deposit theory, and pointed out that the older beds of the earth's crust are regularly stratified, while this superficial mantle is heterogeneous, and in many places it is surmounted with blocks of stone, that have been carried long distances from their original home. These blocks are in many cases found to be of primitive rock, so that they must have been torn away with great violence from their first resting place, and carried along by a rushing torrent to where they now stand. A torrent of water accumulates gravel beds, and its subsidence forms mud beds; and this is just what is found widely spread in many places. One attempt to account for these deposits has been to suppose a vast number of glaciers, that by degrees tore away rocks and gravel, then made their way down some hill side into the sea, broke off and floated away, and then by melting deposited their burden on the sea bottom; then by further supposition the sea bottom was raised and became dry land, became, if necessary, high hills; for the deposits are found on the tops of high hills. But in many cases there are no marine organisms such as would certainly be there if the land had formerly been at the bottom of the sea. Moreover icebergs would have deposited all their freight together, and then heavy blocks of stone would have fallen below the mud instead of being on top of it. Besides, as Robert

Chambers showed in 1850, the glaciers must in some places have travelled up hill !

I will read you two or three statements by geologists of note. Sir Henry Howarth speaks of a "tremendous catastrophe" caused by upheaval of mountain chains and subsidences elsewhere, and he says ;—

The breaking up of the earth's crust at this time, of which the evidence seems to be overwhelming, necessarily caused great waves of translation to traverse wide continental areas, as Scott Russell, Hopkins, Whewell, and Murchison, argued they would ; and these waves of translation as necessarily drowned the great beasts and their companions, including palaeolithic man, and covered them with continuous mantles of loam, clay, gravel, and sand, as we find them drowned and covered. They also necessarily took up the great blocks which the glaciers had fashioned, and transported them to a certain distance, and distributed them and the drift associated with them, as we find them distributed.

Sir J. W. Dawson wrote thus ;—

I have for years, on geological and palaeontological grounds, maintained the existence of a physical break between the earlier and later portions of the Anthropic age, and that this was of the nature of a temporary submergence, which would probably prove to be identical with the historical deluge. The conviction of the truth

of this theory has been growing upon me in recent years, owing to the accumulation of new facts.

Professor Prestwich also maintains the hypothesis of a "wide spread though local and short submergence", and he says ;—

The bones of the animals have evidently been subjected to considerable, but not lasting, violence; for they are broken and splintered but not worn. And though these remains are associated together in, as it were, a common grave, it is impossible to suppose that, under the ordinary conditions of animal existence, such dissimilar orders could have been associated in life : nor, as the bones are free from all traces of gnawing, could these remains have been collected and left by beasts of prey.

Erman, the Siberian explorer, describes the strata of loam and sand which lie at Yakutsk to the depth of at least a hundred feet. He says ;—

They have been deposited from waters which, at one time, and it may be presumed suddenly, overflowed the whole country, as far as the Polar sea.—Everywhere throughout these immense alluvial deposits are now lying the bones of antediluvian quadrupeds, along with vegetable remains.

And after giving other evidence of the wild rush of waters, he adds ;—

So it is clear that at the time when the elephants and trunks of trees were heaped up together, one

flood extended from the centre of the continent to the furthest barrier in the sea as it now is.

Let me give you one more extract. The Duke of Argyll, in his address to the Edinburgh Geological Society, spoke of the bone-caves, packed from floor to ceiling with animal skeletons, in the South of Europe, and said ;—

It is certain that no agency but that of water could have brought them and huddled them up together in such heaps at one spot.

Then after discussing possible explanations of these heaps of bones, he decides for the high probability of this explanation,—

that in very recent times great changes in the moulding of the earth's surface over a great part of Europe occurred with sufficient rapidity to cause a great destruction of animal life, and during the progress of a wide submergence to sweep the bodies of the drowned creatures into fissures and swallow-holes, which were opened or enlarged at the time.

Next let me contrast what the two books say about animals being good or bad.

The Avesta distinguishes some animals as being of the good creation, made by Ahura Mazda, and some of the counter creation, the work of Angra Mainyus : snakes, tortoises, and ants, are of this latter kind. Science knows no such distinction ; every animal has its own place in creation : some are specially noxious to man it is true ; but from a scientific point of view man is

one species of animal, and animals prey upon each other largely, so that to say that snakes are harmful to man is not at all the same as saying that they belong to an opposing creation : and even if it were so, there is no reason for putting a ban upon ants and tortoises.

In the Bible a distinction is drawn between some kinds of animals and others, but the distinction is of a wholly different character; it was made for a temporary purpose, and has been swept away. It related to the fitness of some animals for sacrifice; the animals that might be offered to God in sacrifice were accounted clean, and the others were called unclean. During the Jewish dispensation the same line of demarcation was drawn with respect to food, and the clean beasts only might be eaten. The underlying truth was typical, pointing to the two-fold fitness of Jesus Christ for his great work. But it is also interesting to hear that bacteriological science in our own day is making just the same distinction, and that if we would eat only meats that are really wholesome, we ought still to observe the old Jewish rules. Whether this is so or not, I cannot certainly say.

Another point for comparison is the cause that is alleged for famine.

In the Avesta the commission of certain sins is declared to be a cause of famine. The question is asked if the man can be purified who has brought a corpse to water or to fire.

Ahura Mazda answered; He cannot, O holy Zarathushtra. Those wicked ones it is, those

men turned to Nasus, that most increase⁹ gnats and locusts; those wicked ones it is, those men turned to Nasus, that most increase the grass-destroying drought: those wicked ones it is, those men turned to Nasus, that increase most the power of the winter, produced by the fiends, the cattle-killing, thick snowing, overflowing, the piercing, fierce, mischievous winter.

The connection between the sin and the physical result is apparently taken to be that of cause and effect. The result is not spoken of as judicially sent, so that the intermediate link would be the anger of God,—sin bringing anger, anger showing itself in famine; but the snow (supposed to be hurtful,) and the locusts, and the draught, follow directly from the sin. In the Bible moral causes are in some cases assigned for famines, just as they are for sicknesses, but not as though the result worked itself out by physical sequence. Thus;—

If thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God,...The LORD shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee;...the LORD shall smite thee with blasting and with mildew,...And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron. The LORD shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust; from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed.*

* Deut. XXVIII, 15, 21, 22, 23, 24

I have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and want of bread in all your places; yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD. And also I have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest; and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city; one piece was rained upon, and the piece, whereupon it rained not, withered. So two or three cities wandered unto one city to drink water, but they were not satisfied: yet have ye not returned unto me saith the LORD.*

The difference in this matter between the two books lies in the fact that in the Bible there is distinct recognition of the hand of God; the famine comes as a punishment from him; whereas in the Avesta, winter and locusts, the famine producers, are said to be caused directly by the sinful man's action.

There are other comparisons with scientific discovery in which the Bible stands alone, its statements having no parallel in the Avesta. Electricity is a modern discovery; it was wholly unknown to the ancients; no ancient language has any word by which to designate it. But electrical action was rife then as now. Lightning was seen in ancient times just as it is now; and no language could be without a word to express what is so frequent and so remarkable. Lightning is often seen without rain; and rain is often seen without lightning; and the connection between

* Am. IV, 6—8.

the two is to the ordinary observer by no means necessary. Yet Lord Kelvin, one of our leading electricians, when lecturing to his students at Glasgow not many years ago upon the result of certain experiments, declared his conviction that the connection between the two is necessary. The formation of rain is a more complex process than a careless observer would suppose. There is always some amount of moisture in the air ; it is present in the form of watery vapour ; and this is precipitated whenever the temperature falls below a certain point called the Dew-point. If the amount of vapour is large, so that the atmosphere is nearly saturated, then only a slight fall is needed to bring the temperature down to the Dew-point, and condensation will begin. When it has begun, the condensed vapour may take the form of mist, that is cloud, or it may take the form of rain. In the former case, when there is cloud, the minute globules of water which compose the cloud remain suspended in the air. Why do they remain suspended instead of falling to the ground ? And when they are so suspended, why do they sometimes suddenly change their form, and begin falling in drops of rain ? To explain all this is by no means a simple matter ; and the conclusion Lord Kelvin arrived at was reached only after much study and careful experiment. He said this,—“ I do believe there never is rain without lightning.” Of course he did not mean that we always see lightning in every rain shower, but that the condensation of the moisture in the atmosphere into drops

of rain is an electrical phenomenon. Now look at the 7th verse of the 135th Psalm.*

He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain.

Where did the Psalmist get this idea from? Who taught him that lightning, that is, electrical activity, is necessary for the production of rain? How could he anticipate the results of experiments that have only become possible in our own day, and that need expert electricians to devise, or even to understand? The fact is, the Scripture authors knew nothing about such experiments, or such results; but they wrote what is in strictest harmony with them, for they wrote what the Spirit of God taught them; and he is an electrician, not as a student, but as the designer, and the carrier out of his design.

Take another instance.

The moisture that supplies the rain clouds, and through them feeds our rivers, is taken up into the atmosphere by evaporation. If you pour water on the ground, it will dry up; that is, it will pass from the liquid state to the state of vapour. Similarly evaporation is going on from the surface of all exposed water. The oceans are rendering up vast quantities of water every moment, and supplying the air with its moisture, which is carried along by winds, and deposited, partly on the sea again, and partly on land. The deposit on the land becomes streams and rivers, and so flows back into the sea. The process is one

* Jeremiah repeated the same words. Jer. X, 13, and LI, 16

of constant circulation, so that the sea is becoming neither fuller nor emptier: as much as it renders up by the evaporation returns to it, either as rain, or as rivers flowing into it. This circulation is not among the most modern discoveries; it has been known to our scientific men for generations; but it was not known to the ancients; hence when we find it expressed in the Bible, the inference is irresistible, that as in the case of the lightning for the rain, the writer was taught it by the Spirit of God. Look at the 1st chapter of Ecclesiastes and the 7th verse.

All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full : unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.

There is another and more remarkable instance of a similar kind ; one that the translators of our Bible seem to have found a difficulty. The planets, our earth included, revolve in orbits round the sun, at enormous distances from it. We are about 92 millions of miles from it ; and we are close compared with some of the remoter planets. Also the sun, with all his attendant planets, is himself moving in an orbit ; an orbit so great that no astronomer has yet been able to figure it ; and this orbit is in some way connected with the orbits, perhaps vaster still, of the fixed stars, which are all, or nearly all, suns like our sun, and are perhaps the centers of planetary systems. All this you probably know well enough, and I only mention it to lead on to this question,—What is there in the vast space through which all these heavenly bodies are moving? Think of the fish in the

sea ; all the space in which they move is occupied with water : think of the heavenly bodies ; all the space they move about in is occupied with—What? A name has been adopted, not with any idea that giving a name is offering an explanation, but simply to facilitate our speaking about this space ; the name is Ether. The interstellar space is occupied with Ether. Air is totally different : air is a substance that extends merely as a thin mantle round our globe. If there was air, or anything approaching to it in denseness, in the interstellar space, the motion of this earth and the other heavenly bodies would have been brought to a stop long ago. If there was absolutely nothing in the interstellar space, the light could not travel across that space, and we should be in pitchy darkness. It is upon this thought of the denseness in the Ether, that I wish to enlarge a little. Air, and all created matter even the gases which are much lighter than the air, have some degree of heaviness : all created matter obeys what is called the Law of Gravitation, and that is what gives it weight, or makes it “ponderable,” to use a technical expression. Now if the Creator had placed “ponderable” matter throughout the whole expanse of his creation it would have aggregated itself into separate masses, leaving gaps in between. This is exactly what has happened with the ponderable matter that was created ; it has broken up, massed itself together into stars, and left large gaps. But the Ether behaves in a different way ; it is not ponderable, one particle attracting another ; on the contrary,

it is diffusive, one particle repelling another. When bodies attract one another, their tendency is to draw closer together ; when bodies repel one another, their tendency is to fly apart, to keep at arms length, so to speak : and this is why the Ether fills all the expanse of space, instead of massing into balls like matter, and leaving gaps in between. But now what is the effect of this upon its denseness, or thickness ? The effect is that it has no thickness whatever ; bodies passing through it find no hindrance to their advance, they suffer no loss of velocity. When the Creator made the Ether he impressed upon it a law the reverse of that which operates on all matter : the exact expression of that law has not yet been discovered, but this much is known about it,—it is repulsion not attraction.

You will no doubt perceive from this the necessity which we students of physical science have felt for some such name as Ether ; we want to speak about it, and study it ; but its properties have hitherto baffled our enquiries, while its vastness dazzles our minds. If we had been prevented from inventing a modern term, and had been obliged to choose a word in common use, I think the most suitable word would have been Thinness ; then we might have said, The world and its atmosphere have more or less thickness, but throughout the space in which the world pursues its course there is Thinness.

Now look at the 7th verse of the 26th chapter of the book of Job.

He hangeth the earth upon nothing.

The original word which is here translated Nothing is a very peculiar one. It occurs in this passage only : the poet seems to have invented it for the occasion. The first part of it is a negative particle "not" ; the second part is an interrogative "what?" So that the thought suggested is this ;—if you ask the question, What is there in the space around the earth ? every answer which would suit for other substances must be negated in respect of this one. As a shorter paraphrase I would suggest this,—the space is not filled with any material substance : and as a translation, which of course must be shorter than a paraphrase, I would suggest Imponderability, or, shorter and simpler, but with the same meaning, Thinness ; and so the verse might read,—He hangeth the earth upon Thinness. Perhaps our translators were well advised in their choice of the word Nothing, for it is less beyond the grasp of the ordinary reader than a more accurate word ; but for those who understand technical terms, undoubtedly the correct translation is—He hangeth the earth upon Ether.

And the question comes upon us with even more force than before, How could the Scripture writer have known anything about these discoveries ? How could Job know anything about the interstellar space ? He knew nothing about it ; but the Creator knew all about it, and he taught Job how to avoid error and write truth : and so Job wrote truth beyond what he understood, beyond what the most advanced stu-

dents of physical science understand even now in the twentieth century.

Here I bring these Lectures to a close. If they have helped you towards a truer estimate of the Avesta and the Bible, and of how far we should accept the one or the other as the word of God, they have accomplished their purpose. And if, as a further result, any of you are brought nearer to our heavenly Father, to receive his grace and rejoice in his goodness, Blessed be God.

APPENDIX I.

Eznik's account of the birth of Ormizt and Arhmen: quoted in Haug's *Essays on the Parsis*, p. 13.

(See above, p. 77.)

Before anything, heaven or earth, or creature of any kind what ever therein, was existing, Zeruian existed, whose name means Fortune, or Glory.*

He offered sacrifices for a thousand years in the hope of obtaining a son Ormizt by name, who was to create heaven, earth, and everything therein. After having spent a thousand years in sacrificing, he began to deliberate; Are these sacrifices of mine to produce any effect, and will a son, Ormizt by name, be born to me? While he was thus deliberating, Ormizt and Arhmen were conceived in the womb of their mother, Ormizt as the fruit of his sacrifices, Arhmen as that of his doubts. When Zeruian was aware of this event he said: Two sons are in the womb; he who will first come to me is to be made king. Ormizt, having perceived his father's thoughts, revealed them to Arhmen, saying: Zeruian, our father, intends to make him king who shall be born first. Having heard these words, Arhmen perforated the womb, and appeared before his father. But Zeruian, when he saw

* Haug notes that this interpretation is wrong. The word Zervan means simply Time in the Zend-Avesta, and is preserved in the modern Persian Zaman.

him, did not know who he was, and asked him: who art thou? He told him, I am thy son. Zeruian answered him; My son is well scented and shining, but thou art dark and ill scented. While they were thus talking, Ormizt, shining and well scented, appeared before Zeruian, who, seeing him, perceived him at once to be his son Ormizt on account of whom he was sacrificing. He took the rod which he had used in sacrificing, and gave it to Ormizt, saying: Hitherto this has been used by myself in offering sacrifices for thy sake; henceforth thou mayest sacrifice for my sake. When Zeruian handed over his rod to Ormizt, and blessed him, Arhmen approached him, saying: Hast thou not vowed to make that one of thy two sons king who should first come thee? Zeruian, in order to avoid breaking his vow, replied to Arhmen: O thou liar and evil doer! the empire is to be ceded to thee for nine thousand years; but I place Ormizt over thee as chief, and after nine thousand years he will reign and do what he likes. Then Ormizt and Arhmen began the work of creation; everything produced by Ormizt was good and right, and everything wrought by Arhmen was bad and perverse.

APPENDIX II.

The statements made in Lecture VIII, pp., 152, 153, above, as to the Zoroastrian teaching about putting away sins, may be illustrated from what Mr. Karaka says on the subject. He speaks of their being put away by a man's passing them "as if it were through a sieve of piety and purity, virtue and morality." Whatever this strange expression may mean, it clearly does not mean that God's justice will be maintained unimpaired. The expression occurs in his explanation of why the Parsees reverence the fire. I give the whole passage, as it may interest some of my readers.

Extract from Karaka's History of the Parsis, Vol. II, pp. 211—214.

It will not be out of place here to examine some of the causes that induce a Parsi to reverence fire.

Firstly, fire is held by a Parsi to be the emblem of refulgence, glory, and light, the truest symbol of God, and the best and noblest representative of his divinity. In the words of a learned author, in the eyes of a Parsi "its (fire's) brightness, activity, purity, and incorruptibility, bear the most perfect resemblance to the nature and perfection of the Deity." He looks upon fire as "the most perfect symbol of the Deity on account of its purity, brightness, activity, subtilty, fecundity, and incorruptibility."

Secondly, fire is the noblest, the most excellent, and the most useful of God's creations. Take it in its visible form as the manifestation of heat and light, or in its invisible form as heat, light, &c., it serves innumerable purposes in the animal, vegetable, and mineral worlds. As an important agent in our innumerable arts and manufactures, as an invaluable helpmate in our domestic life, and as an essential factor in the production of hundreds of natural phenomena, not only on the surface of our earth but in the whole solar system, is it not worthy of the reverence paid to it by the ancient Aryans and continued to it even up to this hour by the present generation of Parsis? Are not the numberless blessings which fire in all its different forms bestows upon the surface of the earth sufficient to justify man in paying his respect to this the noblest of God's creations? Looking at the innumerable uses to which fire is put, and the numberless blessings it confers upon us, we can, without the least fear of being contradicted, put the same question as regards fire which Professor Theodore Cooke, of the Poona College, put as regards the sun in his *Natural Philosophy*—"Is not the sun therefore worthy of the reverence which has been paid to him by the early races of mankind and by the Parsis and others in our own time?" These two causes would justify any man, of whatever nationality he might be, in paying his reverence to this symbol of the Deity and to this noble and divine creation.

Thirdly, a new element of purity is added to the fire burning in the Atash-Adarans and Atash-Behrams (fire-temples) of the Parsis by the religious ceremonies accompanied with prayers that are performed over it, before it is installed in its proper place on a vase on an exalted stand in a chamber set apart. The sacred fire burning there is not the ordinary fire burning on our hearths. It has undergone several ceremonies, and it is these ceremonies, full of meaning, that render the fire more sacred in the eye of a Parsi. We will briefly recount the process here. In establishing a fire-temple fires from various places of manufacture are brought and kept in different vases. Great efforts are also made to obtain fire caused by lightning. Over one of these fires a perforated metallic flat tray with a handle attached is held. On this tray are placed small chips and dust of fragrant sandal wood. These chips and dust are ignited by the heat of the fire below, care being taken that the perforated tray does not touch the fire. Thus a new fire is created out of the first fire. Then from this new fire another one is created by the same process. From this new fire another is again produced, and so on, until the process is repeated nine times. The fire thus prepared after the ninth process is considered pure. The fires brought from other places of manufacture are treated in a similar manner. These purified fires are all collected together upon a large vase, which is then put in its proper place in a separate chamber.

Now what does a fire so prepared signify to a Parsi ? He thinks to himself : "When this fire on this vase before me, though pure in itself, though the noblest of the creations of God, and though the best symbol of the Divinity, had to undergo certain processes of purification, had to draw out as if it were its essence, nay, its quintessence, of purity, to enable itself to be worthy of occupying this exalted position, how much more necessary, more essential, and more important is it for me—a poor mortal who is liable to commit sins and crimes, and who comes into contact with hundreds of evils, both physical and mental—to undergo the process of purity and piety, by making my manashni, gava^hni, and kunashni, (thoughts, words, and actions) pass as if it were through a sieve of piety and purity, virtue and morality, and to separate by that means my humata, hukhta, and hvarshta, (good thoughts, good words, and good actions) from dushmata, duzukhta, and duzvarshta, (bad thoughts, bad words, and bad actions,) so that I may in my turn be enabled to acquire an exalted position in the next world."
